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ABSTRACT

This issue contains those materials from a seminar on "Campaigning for Literacy" held at Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, on January 4-11, 1982, that concentrate on Asian experience. The "Udaipur Literacy Declaration," presented first, is followed by extracts from the opening addresses and a review of the report, "Campaigning for Literacy," by H.S. Bhola. The next section contains extracts with particular relevance to the Asian region from the Bhola report, which is an indepth study of eight national literacy campaigns of the 20th century. Four extracts are then provided from country papers and reports dealing with the National Adult Education Program 1978 in India, mass education in Bangladesh, current status and future prospects of literacy in Thailand, and eradication of illiteracy in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Extracts from the Bhola report on literacy movements in Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, and Burma conclude the issue. A selected bibliography is appended. (YLB)

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CAMPAIGNING FOR LITERACY

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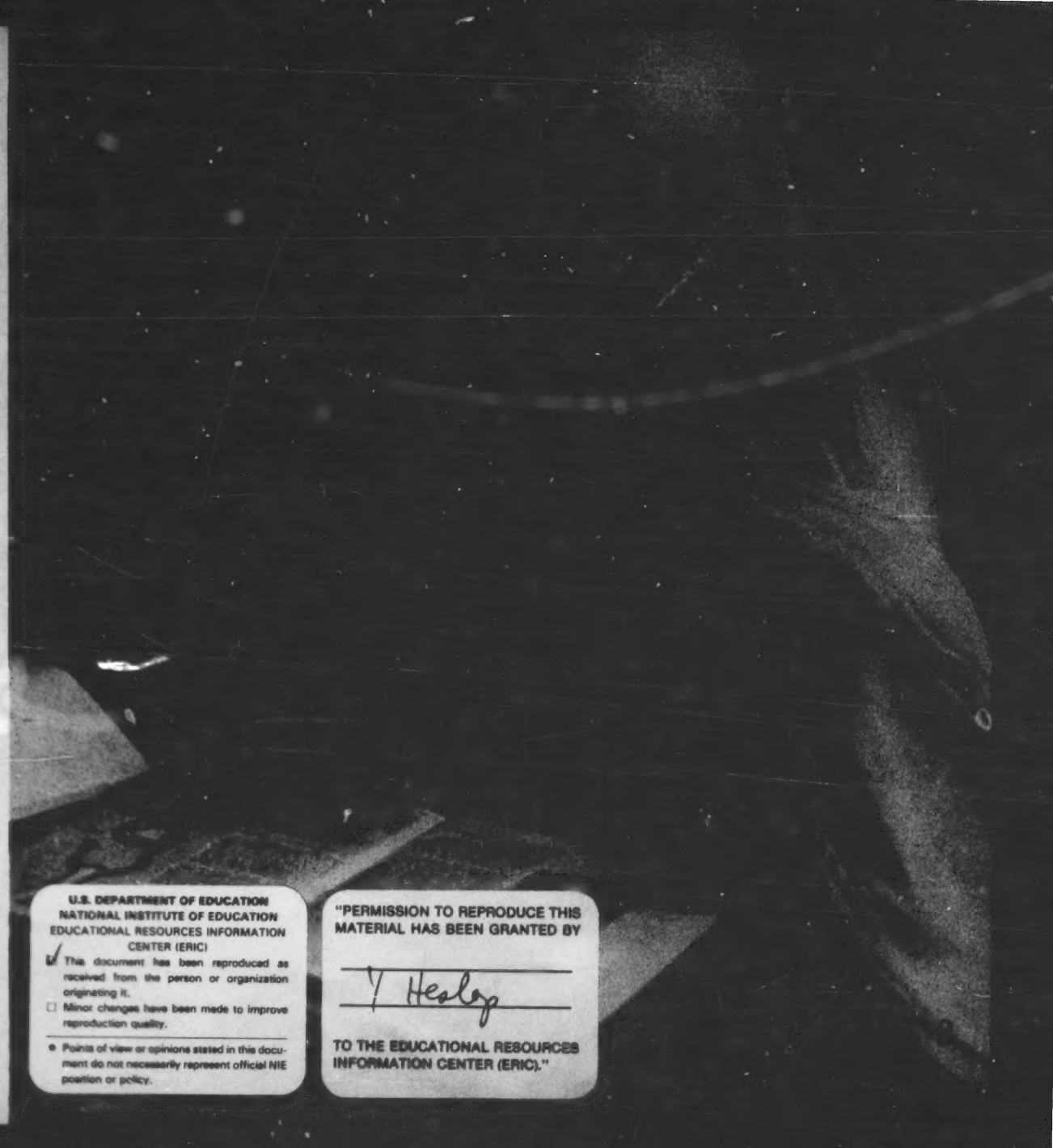

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EDITORIAL

The International Council for Adult Education, The German Foundation for International Development (DSE), and Seva Mandir, together, organised a seminar on the subject of Campaigning for Literacy, at Udaipur, Rajasthan, India, 4 - 11 January, 1982.

The Seminar first considered a series of country case studies of literacy campaigns coordinated and presented in edited form by Professor H.S. Bhola of Indiana University, and examined these case studies in plenary session and working groups before moving into country teams to discuss the implications and possible applications of the campaign approach to their own countries. The Seminar concluded by adopting a statement on the urgent need to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000, also proposing an International Literacy Year later in the present, Third, Development Decade, and stressing the role of mass campaigns in achieving this objective.

Much attention was paid to the importance of the political will and of top level political commitment if campaigns were to be successful, and the importance of good administrative arrangements as well as adequate resource allocation was stressed. Participants adhered to a broad understanding of literacy - learning to read the world as well as the word - and insisted that it was part of a wider struggle against poverty, inequality and oppression. On the whole the most dramatic and successful campaigns, past and present, were waged in a context of post-revolutionary liberation fervour. Where popular and political will were as one, remarkable results have been achieved even in times of extremity and with very modest resources. Commitment, participation and the mobilization of voluntary efforts and energies are evidently very important.

Asia was well represented at the Seminar. Three of the original case studies were of campaigns in Burma, China and Vietnam, and teams from Bangladesh, India and Thailand took part and reported on possible applications to their own countries. This issue of Courier concentrates on Asian experience as presented at the seminar but also includes extracts from the Opening Addresses and a Review of "Campaigning for Literacy", H.S. Bhola, by members of the Indian delegation to the Seminar. A short selected bibliography is also included.

Chris Duke

THE UDAIPUR LITERACY DECLARATION

Recognizing that literacy is a decisive factor in the liberation of individuals from ignorance and exploitation and in the development of society,

Conscious of the need to arouse awareness, nationally and internationally, that the struggle against illiteracy can be won, to demonstrate solidarity with those working on behalf of the thousand million adult illiterates in the world, and to vigorously mobilize the resources and will to eradicate illiteracy before the end of this century,

We representatives of national literacy programmes from Africa, Asia and Latin America, representatives of international organizations, and adult educators from all parts of the world, assembled in Udaipur, India, from 4 to 11 January, 1982, to draw and apply the lessons deriving from campaigns for literacy in many countries,

Hereby adopt this Declaration as a testament of our commitment to the quest for a world in which human dignity, peace, freedom from exploitation and oppression are shared by all.

T H E D E C L A R A T I O N

1. One out of every four adults in the world cannot read or write, victims of the discrimination, oppression and indignity that illiteracy breeds. And yet, the clear lessons from efforts in many countries is that nationally motivated mass campaigns can banish illiteracy, regardless of the adversity of conditions a country faces.

2. The magnitude of the problem in many countries calls for massive efforts. Only specific campaigns with clearly defined targets can create the sense of urgency, mobilize popular support and marshall all possible resources to sustain mass action, continuity and follow-up.

3. It is not enough merely to teach skills linked to general economic development if the poorer classes remain as exploited and disadvantaged as before. A literacy campaign must be seen as a necessary part of a national strategy for overcoming poverty and injustice. A realistic campaign focuses on levels of skills and knowledge achieved, rather than on mere numerical enrolment, and takes into account cultural, geographic and linguistic issues.

4. A literacy campaign is a potent and vivid symbol of a nation's struggle for development and commitment to a just society. It creates a critical awareness among people about their own situation and about their possibilities to change and improve their lives.

5. An effective literacy campaign is part of a comprehensive and continuing effort to raise the level of basic education of women and men. These efforts include universal primary education, post-literacy activities and opportunities for adult education - all of which are necessary components of a true and lasting learning society.

6. The participation of disadvantages groups that historically have remained subjugated and marginal, especially women, demands the priority of special attention. The identification of groups that may require different approaches, such as out-of-school youth, is essential.

7. Legislative measures and resolutions should reflect a national sense of urgency, define the order of priorities attached to the elimination of illiteracy, and set out the responsibilities and rights of citizens in taking part in the campaign and carrying out its priorities.

8. National popular resolve sustains the political, legislative and administrative measures needed to support the campaign and raises it above partisan politics and changes in political viewpoints and personalities.

9. While societies in the midst of profound and structural changes find a favourable climate for successful campaigns, all societies, irrespective of political systems, can activate forces for change and create a supportive political environment.

10. Literacy campaigns succeed and realize their liberating and development potential when there are avenues for popular participation in all phases. Participation can be gained through ensuring that all levels and sectors of government take a leadership role in the campaign and that the full range of voluntary and people-based organizations are partners in mobilizing citizens and resources.

11. Decentralized sharing of responsibility and decision-making in the administrative structure creates both participation and responsibility. Decentralization also implies that central authorities have well-planned roles in policy-making and supportive actions. Clear delineation of responsibilities at different levels means that planning and implementation decisions can be taken close to where the campaign operates.

12. It is desirable to establish equivalence of literacy and post-literacy activities with formal education and to make appropriate linkages with other education work and with such cultural expressions as folk media and the arts.

13. The resources of modern communication and information technology are to be brought to bear on both the creation of a national sense of purpose and on the implementation of the campaign.

14. Research and experimentation are to be directed at improving the pedagogy of the acquisition of literacy skills and at reducing to a minimum the time and effort needed to acquire these skills. Participants should be involved at every stage of monitoring and assessment.

15. Efforts have to be made to mobilize private, voluntary and community resources, both in cash and in services rendered. But effective national campaigns also require a significant allocation of state resources commensurate with the priority attached to the elimination of illiteracy.

16. The eradication of illiteracy is the responsibility of every citizen - leaders and people. Literacy work symbolizes in a powerful way the unity and solidarity of individuals and groups within a country and offers people from all walks of life the opportunity to help others learn and to widen their horizons.

17. In a divided world, where understanding and co-operation often appear as elusive and intangible, the moral imperative of the eradication of illiteracy can unite countries in the sharing of knowledge and in a common and achievable goal.

18. Renewed dedication and effort at the national, regional and international level, is required to overcome the intolerable situation in which hundreds of millions of people find themselves. The planetary dimensions and the unjust social and human implications of illiteracy challenge the conscience of the world.

In consequence of the above, and bearing in mind that the United Nations Third Development Decade has specified the elimination of illiteracy as an essential strategy in the struggle against poverty and inequity,

We call upon the United Nations and its agencies and organizations, and particularly UNESCO, to take the necessary action to declare a World Literacy Year as a concrete step in our common goal of achieving a Literate World by the Year 2000.

Udaipur, India
January 11, 1982

OPENING ADDRESSES*

**Extract from Opening Address by Rudolf Bindig, M.P., Federal Republic of Germany, at the opening seminar.*

"At the beginning of the Third Development Decade the industrial and developing countries undertook to critically examine their former concepts of cooperation.

In this process it became clear that development cannot be reduced to statistical values of economic growth and per capita income but that it is based on social justice. The development process should not proceed along the lines of imitating western models, but on elaborating and testing own, self-developed concepts. People cannot be developed from outside. It is up to them to develop themselves, and it is the objective of every type of development policy to create the pre-requisites and possibilities for this process.

Independent development in Third World countries is not possible without large-scale basic education programmes. The problems of poverty and illiteracy overlap. The 800 million illiterates are among the poorest in this world. If even after extending the primary school system we do not succeed in implementing basic education programmes oriented towards the needs of the population, we will still have about one billion illiterates in this world by the year 2000.

As is well known, basic education programmes do not only aim at teaching the alphabet; they also seek to impart the knowledge and skills required for improving living conditions, and to initiate the comprehensive process of conscientization which induces people to critically reflect on their situation, to shape their own environment and actively participate in the development process. Basic education programmes thus ultimately serve the liberation of the people as defined at the Persepolis Conference in 1975.

Yet all this cannot be achieved by literacy campaigns alone, which must be envisaged as short-term projects if they are to mobilize large numbers of the population. The experience of the past decade indeed shows that literacy programmes should not be overloaded. Learning to read, write and calculate, which often implies learning a second language, is difficult enough. Thus if the first phase is limited to reading, writing and arithmetic only, post-literacy and continuing education programmes become even more necessary to consolidate that which has been learned and to induce youths and adults to continue learning in their occupational, social and cultural environment or within the formal education framework and thus to learn not only to "read the word but the world", as formulated at the Persepolis Conference."

Extract from Welcoming Address by Dr Malcolm Adiseshiah, Chairman of the Campaigning for Literacy Seminar, Udaipur, India.

"FEATURES OF OUR TASK

First, while the number of adult illiterates has increased by 58 million in the seventies, the number of literates during this decade increased by over six times that number of illiterates, by 355 millions. This points to the efforts made by a number of countries to counter massively the massive levels of illiteracy, which means that illiteracy can be tackled successively.

Second, about 70 per cent of the world's adult illiterates, that is 434 million out of 627 million adult illiterates referred to earlier, live in 11 developing countries. The countries are India (243 million), Indonesia (29 million), Bangladesh (27 million), Pakistan (30 million), Nigeria (27 million), Brazil (18 million), Ethiopia (16 million), Egypt (11 million), Iran (11 million), Afghanistan (10 million) and Sudan (9 million). It is these 11 countries who have to make a special effort in the eighties to eradicate the scandal of illiteracy.

Third, in addition, there are 32 other of our countries where adult illiterates form more than 50 per cent of their populations. They are Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Tanzania, Central Africa, Chad, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Botswana, Benin, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guineabissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Upper Volta, Haiti, Nepal, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the two Yemens, and Papua and New Guinea. I mention these 32 countries, because we have empirical evidence that the critical threshold for abolishing illiteracy in a country is to make at least 50 per cent of its people literate. In addition to the 11 countries mentioned earlier, these 32 countries have therefore to make a special effort to reach this threshold during the eighties.

Fourth, it is no accident that the number of adult illiterates in our third world and the number of the poor in that world are identical. Illiteracy is part of the vicious circle of poverty in which the 614 million people live. Their poverty is itself a function of the social and economic inequalities of the societies, and so the programe to reverse illiteracy has to be a part of the programme to counter the unequal societal relations, expressed in the unequal distribution of assets and property ownership. Adult literacy programmes can be an effective mobilising force in bringing about the needed structural changes.

A COMPLEX TASK

I have not discussed the question whether or not we should eradicate illiteracy. I assume that as countries which have

fought and recently gained our independence, this question of justifying the eradication of illiteracy is not relevant to us. I have also not tried to outline the economic, societal or cultural justifications for a literate population. I feel that the decision makers in our countries are not concerned with these considerations. It is entirely a political issue, calling for political will and decisions - which can be brought about in a revolutionary situation such as obtained in our countries when we attained our independence. I feel that most of us missed that great and unique opportunity to restructure our societies, our educational systems and in the process to eliminate illiteracy."

Extract from Inaugural Address by Shrimati Sheila Kaul, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and Culture, Udaipur, January 4, 1982

"It is now increasingly recognised that adult education can no longer be a fringe sector of activity in any society and must be given its own proper place in educational policies and budgets. It has also become clearer that literacy training is only an element in adult education and that in all areas where there is widespread illiteracy, programmes organised for the adult education must include a strong literacy campaign....

There was a time when literacy training aimed at giving the illiterate sufficient command of the mechanisms of reading, writing and elementary arithmetic to afford him access to the written or printed word. But the situation has changed vastly during the last two decades. There has been a significant shift, and literacy training is being conceived to aim at an integrated instruction in reading and writing and in technical, occupational, scientific and civic activity. In other words, there has been a shift from mere literacy to functional literacy. As a matter of fact, since the World Congress of Ministers of Education on the Eradication of Illiteracy, which was held at Teheran in September, 1965, interest in functional literacy training has grown steadily. There has been a sustained search to provide more efficient instruments for combating illiteracy than those which were available in the past. And significant experiments in different parts of the world have given rise to new approaches that render literacy as an integral part of a total process that aims at the ultimate acquisition of vocational skills and usable knowledge.

But this is not all. There has come about an increasing awareness that there is in every country a special cultural background which has a living web of knowledge and experience and that the so-called illiterates share this inherited knowledge and experience and use it in a manner that is not so easily understood or appreciated by those who often play the role of the teachers. The illiterate Indian peasant, for example, is often culturally richer than his literate teacher. Situations like this compel us to add a fresh dimension to the literacy programmes and to the programmes of literacy campaigns.

The art of living transcends the confines even of functional literacy. The art of the control of impulses and of channelling the base energies for constructive and artistic activities is a thing that needs an inner refinement that is superior to and sometimes independent of the learning of 3 R's, even when integrated with occupational technology. And it is necessary that the instructors of literacy bear in mind that their teaching and the learning materials do not obliterate the important context of the art of living.

The success of the adult education programmes cannot be measured merely in terms of financial allocation or in terms of the number of organisations which are involved in the task. The real test of success lies in the awareness that is created among people. The illiterate should feel the need to become literate; the neo-literates should feel the need to continue their literacy; and the literate and the educated should feel it a part of their duty to educate the illiterates and neo-literates. And it is in creating this awareness that campaigning for literacy has a special role. As a matter of fact, every centre of literacy is an instrument of this campaign. But it is only when there is a massive atmosphere making every individual a centre of radiation that we can confidently hope to achieve our goals.

There is no doubt that mass media can play a vital role. Newspapers, radio and television can all contribute to the creation of the needed atmosphere. They can also transmit the contents of education. Ways and means can be devised by which the contents of education can be displayed imaginatively in villages and in towns whereby people can learn almost effortlessly. The new space technology which enables us to put satellites to orbit round the earth has opened up new possibilities for campaign for literacy. In India, we are planning to put a domestic satellite, INSAT, in its orbit this year, and we are undertaking a big programme for the production of the necessary software.

I believe that women have to play a greater role than they have done hitherto. There are numberless housewives who can easily spare at least one or two hours per day for social and constructive work. I have my own experience in organising women's groups and centres and I feel that if these centres can be organised and can be sustained, we can train a number of women to undertake the work of literacy. And I believe that if the energy of the women is awakened and channelled properly in the field of literacy, the results can be truly astounding.

In any successful campaign for literacy, special attention should be paid to the needs of the training of instructors and preparation of instructional material. For this purpose, there is a need to establish resource centres which should have the necessary equipment of preparing and disseminating instructional material.

We should also make an extensive use of traditional and folk media. And steps should be taken to establish a nationwide network of libraries which are closely linked to the adult education programmes."

Extract from Presidential Address of Chief Minister, Mr Shiv Charan Mathur (Rajasthan).

"Adult education is a subject that affects the lives of nations. It has been recognised by the world today as a tool of all round development. Education is an important means of change - change from primitiveness to modernisation; from ignorance to wisdom, from backwardness to growth, from poverty to better living and from darkness to light. Contrary to popular belief, adult education is relevant not only to developing countries but also to developed and most advanced countries of the world. Pockets of deprivation and darkness exist there too. In these pockets adult education is as relevant or probably more relevant than in developing countries. If a nation chooses to develop but remains illiterate, it would only be indulging in an apparent exercise in choice but in essence a paradox in so far as it has never happened and will never happen. For sustaining freedom and for having a living democracy at work proper education of masses is a must. Illiteracy is a serious impediment to the individual's growth and the country's socio-economic progress. Illiterates and the poor can only achieve their liberation through education and action.

The United Nations Charter guarantees every citizen of the world the right to be educated; to be educated for bettering the lives of people for a more meaningful existence. Many countries of the world have fully understood the philosophy of and need to educate its people and have consequently accomplished striking results. But many of the third world countries have yet to travel a long way. Their means are limited and needs are very many. Population explosion makes things still more difficult. A huge resources reservoir is needed for catering to the needs of education of masses.

In our own country there has been a tremendous educational effort during the last three decades. But the formal system of education could not cater for the needs and aspirations of people at large. We spend almost 2500 crores of rupees every year on education, next only to defence requirements. Yet this large chunk of money spent could not bring the 'deprived ones' to the fold of formal education. It is, therefore, desirable to explore the alternatives and conceive of new strategies for educating the masses in India and other developing nations of the world. However, a word of caution here. A uniform system of adult education would not do. It becomes absolutely necessary that alternative systems of education should be relevant to the environment, needs and aspirations of the people. The system of education should be so geared as to elicit and promote the participatory role of people in the entire developmental

effort of the country. It should be able to awaken, arouse and strengthen the poorest of the poor.

To my mind it is only 'adult education' which can lead a nation's destiny to its desired socio-economic and cultural goals. Adult education does not mean literacy alone. Although literacy is an essential and integral part of education, it is not all. A well thought out adult education programme should be able to equip its clientele with the spirit of self-respect and national pride. It should awaken and organise the poor people for action towards achievement of better living conditions in rural areas and urban slums. It should also be accompanied by an effort which has a direct and positive bearing on the profession or vocation of the learner.

In this way, to my mind, adult education is a long process. It is a process which goes on beyond the period of formal schooling; it is a continuous process.

Thus, adult education has the basic components of literacy, skills development and an awakening that in due course will turn into an awareness. While it would make one aware of the objective environment better it would simultaneously release processes by which the subjective perception of this environment along with internationalisation of values will begin. In this sense, it is needed for all: for illiterates and literates, for skilled and unskilled, for labourers and intellectuals, for administrators and public servants, it is required for all."

* * * * * *

CAMPAIGNING FOR LITERACY: A REVIEW

Prepared by members of the Indian Delegation for International Seminar on Campaigning for Literacy, Udaipur, India 4-11 January, 1982.

A REVIEW of CAMPAIGNING FOR LITERACY - A critical analysis of some selected literacy campaigns of the 20th Century with a memorandum to decision-makers, by H.S. Bhola, Indiana University April 1981.

"Campaigning for Literacy", by H.S. Bhola, is the report an an in-depth study of eight national literacy campaigns of the 20th Century, prepared by the author on behalf of the International Council for Adult Education, which was commissioned by Unesco to conduct such a study with a view to have "detailed information as well as a critical assessment and analysis of the experiences gained with some successful literacy campaigns of this Century" and to summarize and analyze the lessons of those experiences, which may be applicable, with suitable adaption, to the circumstances of nations currently engaged in efforts to overcome illiteracy. In the words of the author, "this report is addressed to all those engaged in this difficult process of decision-making, in countries disadvantaged by high rates of illiteracy as well as in societies where universal adult literacy seems tantalizingly within reach".

The report "Campaigning for Literacy" will be used as the basic document for the international seminar on the same theme. According to a seminar document, "Mass adult literacy is now accepted as a dynamic element for both the economic and political promotion of societies. The selective, though intensive, approaches to the eradication of illiteracy during the 1960s and 1970s did not prove to be an effective or economic means for coping with the problems of mass illiteracy. On the other hand, the analysis of mass campaigns put the campaign approach in a promising light." (The International Seminar on "Campaigning for Literacy" will have the abovementioned premises as its starting point.)

The report is in five parts. Part I contains the preliminaries, which include the background and context of the study, its nature and objectives and the methodology used. Part II is a detailed analysis of several strong and valid justifications for promoting literacy programmes and successfully answers three important questions - Why Literacy? Why Literacy Can't Wait? and Why Mass Literacy Campaigns? Part III presents success stories, through case studies, of literacy campaigns in the USSR, Viet Nam, China, Cuba, Burma, Brazil, Tanzania and Somalia, and shows very clearly the 'relationships between and among ideology, policy, technology and results of the campaigns. Part IV contains an analysis of experiences with mass literacy campaigns, which is supported by the theory of cultural action, thus, developing a practical memorandum for decision-makers. The five

parts in the report lead one another in the proper sequence and the conclusions are the same as the premises mentioned elsewhere in this review.

The third part of the report (is the most important one, as it) contains the case studies of eight national literacy campaigns, (each written with as much detail as possible.) Each case study narrates the historical background and setting of the country, objectives of the campaign and the driving forces behind it, planning, organising, and evaluation of the campaign, mobilisation of the people, administrative and technical infrastructure, teaching methodology and teaching-learning materials used for the campaign and the lessons drawn from it. (The eight case studies over a period of about six decades, i.e. from 1919 to 1980.) The lessons drawn from the eight case studies not only give food for thought, but afford convincing proof that literacy campaigns can be successful provided the right conditions are available; and in highlighting the same, the report provides the necessary insights into the dynamics of organising national literacy campaigns within a time frame....

Political will and commitment, following from an ideology and popular mobilization have emerged as the most important inputs necessary for the success of national literacy campaigns.

Some of the generalisations one can attempt (after going through all the eight case studies presented by Professor Bhola) are as follow:

1. Almost all the literacy programmes were part of freedom struggles or revolutions which changed the basic political structure of the nation. The leaders of these movements lent their personal support to the literacy programmes in full measure. In fact, these leaders made literacy campaigns as one of the basic elements to the success of their movement.

2. In all the campaigns, the political cadres played a very important role. The cadre for adult education was developed through working with people during the campaign and it was this cadre which made success of adult education programmes.

3. In few of the countries, the programme did not enjoy the flexibility of material and methodology, but in most of the countries enough flexibility in material and methodology was in-built in the movement for adult education. It was thought that adult education programmes must show concern for local conditions and respect people's values and traditions in order to secure their participation.

4. The aim of all literacy campaigns was to secure greater popular participation in the decision-making. It was felt that literate and awakened people would safeguard the gains of the revolutions.

5. As the literacy campaigns gained momentum, they found several problems of training and material which were solved through improvisations by the people themselves.

6. In all adult education programmes, literacy was considered a very important and core element. In fact, the goals of literacy were very clearly defined which enabled the cadre working in the field of adult education to direct their efforts to a very specific objective.

7. Most of the campaigns sought initially quick results and they had been trying to find out ways and means of making their literacy campaigns a success in the shortest possible time. However, in most of the cases the actual campaigns had to be continued for a longer period.

8. Whenever a campaign approach was adopted, all agencies and resources were mobilised. Total mobilisation was, in fact, one of the main strengths of a successful campaign. In this mobilisation, formal system of education was fully involved and provided necessary technical support to the adult education programmes.

9. The motivation for literacy campaign was not so much economic but change in socio-cultural status of the people.

10. There was an informal review of the campaigns at various levels and this enabled the implementors of the campaigns to provide necessary correctives to its implementation in the field. This review helped sustain the programme and respond to the changing needs of the situation.

11. All literacy campaigns gave great importance to voluntary effort and it was through the voluntary effort that these campaigns tried to achieve spectacular success they had been aiming at.

12. The political commitment and will was reflected mostly in constitution of central organisations with wide powers. These organisations were able to coordinate the efforts of other agencies and provide necessary technical support. All these commissions had their branches from the top to the grassroot level.

13. All campaigns had a sense of urgency attached to them. It was this sense of urgency which enabled people to mobilise all resources, men and material, and improvise material, methodologies etc. to achieve the final goals.

The memorandum for decision-makers in Part V (Chapter XII) of the report attempts to formulate an international strategy for the eradication of illiteracy worldwide. In the words of the author, "In presenting a general technology of literacy campaign, we do not presume to offer the one correct way of planning and implementing a mass literacy campaign. In other words, we are not seeking to propose here a set of instructions which must be

followed in one particular order in the planning and conduct of mass literacy campaigns." The memorandum also contains quite a few suggestions and comments like the following:

"The worst enemies of a literacy campaign may be the organisers of the campaign themselves. They may not dream big, may not think big enough and may make organisational responses which are completely inadequate to the real needs of the campaign."

In the concluding chapter of the report, while comparing the motivational-developmental model with the structural-developmental model, Professor Bhola says: "The structural-developmental model, as we have indicated earlier, is a more complete model of cultural action than is motivational-developmental model. The former is a more sufficient model since it offers full affiliations to the excluded and the disenfranchised: cultural and ideological rewards lead to new distribution of power and status right away, and to economic rewards soon thereafter. On the other hand, all literacy work based on the motivational-developmental model and using economic justifications must not be damned out of hand. That may indeed be the only feasible, or even the only possible approach within a particular political setting at a particular time in history. There is hope in partial economic affiliations, too; for they carry within them the seeds of discontent that makes people search for fuller affiliations within societies."

The report is unique in the sense that besides presenting eight case studies of mass literacy campaigns, it has brought into focus several theoretical and practical issues relating to literacy, analysed methodological guidelines, suggested alternative models for justifications for literacy and formulated a general model for organising and implementing mass literacy campaigns.

Each country has to take into consideration several parameters while planning for a national literacy campaign; however, a general model, suggested in the report, for the planning and implementation of literacy campaigns, comes in handy, and the PERT chart explains how the various processes in the model have been organised against a time dimension. Here lies the practical usefulness of the report, and it serves as a tool for planning literacy campaigns in India.

Members of the Indian Delegation
International Seminar on
"Campaigning for Literacy",
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CAMPAIGNING FOR LITERACY

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOME SELECTED LITERACY CAMPAIGNS OF THE 20TH CENTURY, WITH A MEMORANDUM TO DECISION MAKERS.

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H.S. Bhola prepared a "Report to the International Council for Adult Education, the German Foundation for International Development and Seva Mandir, India" based on case studies commissioned by the International Council for Adult Education under contract to UNESCO as well as from other published and unpublished sources. The following section contains extracts from the Report with particular relevance to the Asian region.

Chapter III (p.19 - 21)

Why Literacy? Why Literacy Can't Wait? Why Mass Literacy Campaigns? - Issues for the 1980s

The battle for nonformal education seems to have been won - not by reason but by circumstances. That education had something to do with development has been realized for some time, but education had meant formal education. Then, a crisis and a challenge came together.

The crisis was the crisis of formal education (Coombs, 1968). Educational planners were overwhelmed by scarce resources, burgeoning school-age populations, endemic wastage and stagnation within the formal education system, abysmally low quality of the system's products, and the socio-economic vacuum in which the 'graduates' of the formal education system entered as school-leavers. The challenge was the challenge of national development. Peasants, workers, housewives needed to be informed, influenced, taught new skills and resocialized, to enable them to participate in the processes of development. Educational planners were forced to accept the reality that nonformal education was not only necessary but was, indeed, an immediate need.

Yet the victory for nonformal education has not been a victory for adult literacy. Notwithstanding some recent succcesses with literacy and literacy campaigns as seen in Brazil, Nicaragua, Tanzania and Vietnam, educators continue to show ambivalence towards adult literacy (Verner, 1974). Characterizing literacy as 'gradualism' (Postman, 1970), they want to gallop away with nonformal education without literacy. The argument is that adult illiterates are not motivated to become literate; do not typically have an immediate use of literacy skills in their milieu; and the information and skills they need urgently can be communicated to them through nonprint media without the need for them to become literate first. It is development, they argue, that must come first. Development will then create needs for literacy which can be met when they arise (Crone, 1979).

Those advocating the cause of adult literacy assert that literacy can not be postponed: it is needed in the short-run, it is needed in the middle-run, and it is needed in the long-run (Bhola, 1979). Literacy and nonformal education without literacy are not merely two different instrumental approaches to promoting development; they constitute a choice between two different epistemologies (Goody, 1968; McLuhan, 1962), between two different processes of formation of individual identities and structural relationships. Literacy is thus not merely a vehicle for development information, but a potent partner in development. For that reason, it can not be simply substituted by nonprint media to perform equivalent educational tasks and to fulfill equivalent development objectives.

If illiterate adults are not motivated and if the social milieu, presently, does not offer functional uses of literacy, we have the important developmental challenge to fashion new needs, to teach new motivations, to reconstruct environments. Nonformal education without literacy is, by no means, without its problems of motivation and of unresponsive milieu. The task of teaching adult literacy may seem harder but it is perhaps also more significant. Therefore - the proponents of adult literacy assert - nonformal education should always be based upon a program of adult literacy, with the literacy objective being one of the central objectives.

As we enter the Third Development Decade, the argument is by no means settled and the issue is still very much alive. Policy makers and planners all over the developing world will be hearing voices on both sides of the argument as they engage in the difficult process of making choices among educational approaches and strategies to serve development objectives. But simple assertions pro and con will not be enough. The argument on behalf of adult literacy and the logic of nonformal education without literacy must be laid down clearly and discussed fully, for policy makers and planners to make appropriate choices suited to their unique contexts and to be able to make appropriate justifications for the choices made.

SECTION III
WHY MASS LITERACY CAMPAIGNS? (p. 46 - 49)

Within a policymaking framework, one can conceptualize three program options for literacy promotion within societies:

1. The diffusion approach
2. The selective-intensive approach, and
3. The mass approach

In this section, we will very briefly analyze the logic underlying each program strategy and evaluate available experiences with these three different approaches. We will try to show that, in comparison with other approaches, the mass approach seems to be the most promising approach for the eradication of illiteracy as we enter the 1980s.

The diffusion approach assumes that literacy will come through universal elementary education. As the graduates of the elementary schools enter adulthood and join the economy and as the older generations pass away, literacy will have diffused throughout the society. This is the 'long siege' approach to eradicate illiteracy - eradication through attrition.

Those who promote this approach believe that childhood and adolescence are the best periods of life for learning; and that, on the other hand, adults are not competent learners. Even when adults do have the mental capacity for learning, they are supposedly overwhelmed by obligations to the family and to the community. If adults have survived without literacy that far in their lives, why not, it is asked, let them muddle through life, instead of taking already scarce educational resources away from the children?

We have already shown some of these assertions to be untenable in our earlier discussion. Adults are excellent learners since as they learn, they also learn how to learn and become expert learners. No adult is too busy to learn because of the family and community obligations. Indeed, learning to read and write should be seen as an unfulfilled obligation to the family and the community which must not be neglected any longer. Also, the resources for adult literacy are seldom diverted directly from elementary education. Quite often a program for adult literacy would mean greater overall allocations to education. We must also remember that expenditures on adult literacy are likely to improve the rate of returns on formal elementary education. (Bhola, 1979)

Quite apart from the logic of the arguments pro and con, the experience of developing countries in the post-colonial period tells us that our hopes of eradicating illiteracy through attrition will not be fulfilled in the context of existing demographic trends, for decades in most countries.

The selective and intensive approach seeks to promote literacy among those select economic regions, select occupational groups and within those select age cohorts which offer the highest promise of economic returns and to work with them intensively for maximum effect. This approach accepts the central role of literacy in the process of development, but it makes segmented commitments. The hope is that after the economic take-off within some selected sectors, there will be spillover to other economic sectors which will then become eligible for intensive inputs of material and literacy. In the meantime, the unstated assumption is that mass literacy will be a waste.

The literacy campaign approach is a mass approach that seeks to make all adult men and women in a nation literate within a particular time frame. Literacy is seen as a means to a comprehensive set of ends - economic, social-structural, and political. Elsewhere, I have suggested that a national literacy campaign can serve as the moral equivalent of 'the Long March' (Bhola, 1979). In too many countries of the Third World, the struggle for independence has been outside the direct experience of the masses. Independence has been good news, but most people have been spectators rather than participants in the movement. The mobilization necessary for a successful literacy campaign can provide the people with a deeply felt political experience resulting in a sense of nationhood.

In terms of more concrete planning considerations, the declaration of a mass campaign is a declaration for 'business unusual'. This can allow for a mobilization of commitment and resources impossible to achieve under other conditions. By giving the campaign a mass orientation, this strategy can make people teach other people, using peoples' resources.

Concluding remarks

Policy choices can not be made by some systematic and deterministic process of deduction. Assertions about what is and what will most likely follow are not unequivocal. Research is inadequate, theories are untested. Politics and ideologies confound us further.

In the arguments presented before, research may not always be persuasive, but theory is compelling. Theory gives us an idea of what literacy has done to individual identities and to collective consciousness in literate societies and compels us to think what it might do in the Third World. Where theory also falters, ideology takes over. Literacy is a human right. How dare we question? How dare we not campaign?

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THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE EXTRACTS TAKEN FROM COUNTRY PAPERS AND REPORTS PRESENTED TO THE SEMINAR "CAMPAIGNING FOR LITERACY" UDAIPUR, 4 - 11 JANUARY 1982.

INDIA

"Status Report - India" p.18 - 34

NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM (NAEP) 1978

Coverage

The objective of the Programme was to cover, within a period of about five years (1979-80 to 1983-84), the entire illiterate population in the 15 - 35 age group. The estimated size of the illiterate population in this age-group (in 1976) was about 100 million, as against a total population in this age-group of about 200 million. Assuming that this programme was successfully completed by 1984, the literacy rate of the country as a whole would still be no more than about 60 per cent.

The Concept and Content

The NAEP had three elements: literacy, functionality and awareness. Literacy includes reading, writing and numeracy. Functionality included improvement of the skills and capabilities of an individual in discharge of functions as part of his vocation, as a citizen and as a member of the family. Awareness visualises a sense of social obligation, and included consciousness about the manner in which the poor were deprived of the benefits of the various laws and policies intended for them. The NAEP assumed that these objectives would be realized through a basic programme of ten months to be followed by post-literacy and follow-up activities. It also intended to bring together the various adult education programmes of the Central and State Governments that existed earlier.

Resource Development

The NAEP recognised the importance of training for instructors as well as all other personnel involved in the programme. It also envisaged that relevant and diversified instructional materials would be made available by competent agencies. The Directorate of Adult Education at the Centre was strengthened and designated as a National Resource Agency. As envisaged in the programme, State Resource Centres (SRCs) have been set up in most of the States. In addition to organisation of training programmes and production of learning materials, the SRCs assisted in the production of post-literacy and follow-up materials, besides organising evaluation and monitoring.

Organisation

The basic unit of the programme is an adult education centre. It is under the charge of an instructor who is paid a monthly honorarium of Rs. 50/- only as a token of his voluntary effort. About 30 centres are placed under a supervisor and 100-300 centres, located in a compact area, form a project, headed by a project officer. Separate Directorates of Adult Education have been set up in some States, and there is provision for a post of District Adult Education Officer (DAEO) in each district. Advisory boards have also been set up at the national, state and district levels.

Implementing Agencies

The Programme envisaged involvement of all official and non-official agencies which could contribute to its effective implementation. Voluntary agencies had been given an important place. The programme emphasised that educational institutions - universities, colleges and schools - had a major role to play. Employers in industries, trade, etc. were expected to set up literacy centres for their employees. The NAEP recognised that organisations of workers, peasants, youth and teachers could contribute to the programme; but they were not eligible for financial assistance from the Government.

The different agencies participating in the programme are shown in the table below:

Figures in 000s

Implementing Agency	No. of centres conducted	
	as on 30.6.79	as on 31.1. 80
1. State Governments	51 (53.8)	78 (67.0)
2. Voluntary Agencies	33 (34.7)	28 (24.6)
3. Universities & Colleges	3 (3.9)	5 (4.4)
4. Nehru Yuvak Kendras (Nehru Youth Centres)	7 (7.6)	5 (4.0)

It is evident from the table that major part of the programme was managed by the Government, although voluntary organisations, universities and other colleges contributed to the programme.

Due to concerted efforts by various agencies involved in the programme, the enrolment in adult education centres increased from .675 million in 1977 to 3.6 million in 1980.

A Critical Review of the NAEP

1. The programme so far had largely remained confined to literacy. Further, in the absence of necessary research and the failure to develop appropriate methodologies of literacy learning, even the literacy programme had not been as effective as expected.

2. Perhaps, the most crucial aspect of the NAEP was the linking of adult education with development programmes. This was not easy to achieve and, in spite of some efforts made in this behalf, it had not been possible to develop and organise this linkage effectively. Consequently, the development orientation of the programme was superficial and the functional component in the courses almost non-existent.

3. As far as the awareness component was concerned, although some useful work was done in some projects, where proper leadership was available, there was generally speaking, a lack of clarity among the workers regarding the meaning and content of awareness.

4. Little attention had been paid in the programme to science. The NAEP should have made a significant contribution to popularisation of science and its relation to environment. It could have promoted in the participants some feeling and awareness of the relation to science to our great cultural heritage, and for shaping the future.

5. A number of States, for example, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya and Orissa, seem to have remained almost unaffected by the NAEP and continued to run literacy programmes of the earlier type.

6. The programme, despite its intent, was in practice, not flexible, diversified and decentralised enough.

7. Learning materials, generally speaking, had been prepared for a whole language group, often separately for men and women, but without giving due attention to the diverse interests and needs of the learners.

8. The importance of functionality and awareness, as integral parts of the adult education programme, although being recognised, could not be satisfactorily reflected in the programmes.

9. Taken as a whole, the programme mainly remained the responsibility of education departments of the State Governments. Other institutions and agencies, including media, had yet to involve themselves in a significant way.

As is evident, India has gained considerable experience in planning, initiating and implementing adult education programmes

over the past three decades. As a result of several such programmes, which were of fairly large size, the country has been able to develop considerable expertise in the field of training and material development. An infrastructure to implement the programme has come to stay. The mechanism for resource support is another important gain of the past literacy programmes in the country. The achievements, varying from State to State, have been considerable. The following table shows the improvement in the literacy rate over the past three decades:-

Decennial Population and Literacy Rate

Year	Population in millions			Literacy Rate %		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
1961	226.15	212.79	438.94	34.5	13.0	24.0
1971	284.05	264.05	548.16	39.5	18.7	29.5
1981	353.35	330.46	683.81	46.74*	34.88*	36.17*

*Excludes Assam, Jammu & Kashmir

The adult education programme did not find a uniform response in all the States of the country. Some States showed much greater interest and commitment in the adult education programme while others were indifferent to it. Some of the States have, in fact, received recognition from the international community in the form of awards for their commendable work in the field of adult education. Special mention may be made of the Unesco International Literacy Award for 1980 received by the State of Bihar which has considerably expanded the programme of adult education and has adopted several innovative practices during the course of implementation of this programme.

Generally speaking, voluntarism in India has made a significant contribution in sustaining the adult education programme since Independence. Some of these organisations had developed materials, training methodologies and effective delivery systems. This contributed to the resource development efforts in no small measure. As a consequence of their expertise developed during a number of years, some of them were given the status of State Resource Centre for providing technical support to the programme. Some of the organisations, which have a long tradition of working in the field of adult education, are the Literacy House, Lucknow; the Karnataka State Adult Education Council, Mysore; The Indian Institute of Education, Pune; the Andhra Mahila Sabha, Hyderabad; the Bengal Social Service League, Calcutta; Seva Mandir, Udaipur; the Bombay City Social Education Committee, etc.

Future Directions

When the NAEP had hardly completed one year of its operation, the Government of India appointed a Review Committee in October 1979 to make a comprehensive review of this programme and to make recommendations to make its implementation more effective. The Committee consisted of eminent adult educators, educationists and journalists. Although it was considered premature to have this evaluation, it did help to dispel many misgivings about the programme and provided opportunities to the Government to introduce necessary corrective measures on time. The adult education programme has been included as a part of the Minimum Needs Programme in the Sixth Five Year Plan. It will be pertinent here to quote from the Sixth Five Year Plan document in order to give an idea of the present thinking of the government as far as adult education programme is concerned:

ADULT EDUCATION AND THE SIXTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN

"21.22 the Sixth Plan lays emphasis on minimum essential education to all citizens, irrespective of their age, sex and residence. The approach to achieve this objective would be characterised by flexibility, inter-sectoral cooperation and inter-agency coordination. Techniracy would be adopted as the major instrument for the spread of literacy, numeracy and practical skills relevant to the economic activities of the people concerned. It would be supported by post-literacy, continuing education through a network of rural libraries as well as instructional programmes through mass communication media, particularly after the INSAT (Indian National Satellite) is launched to its orbit.

"21.33 Non-formal education for adults, particularly in the productive age-group 15 - 35 years, would receive priority in the Sixth Plan, in view of its potential for immediate impact in raising the level of productivity in the economy. The programme of adult education, which had been initiated in the previous Plans and which form part of the Minimum Needs Programme of elementary education, would be made more effective and extended in cooperation with other developmental activities and the employment agencies. The programme would aim at extending appropriate educational support to the concerned groups of individuals and development departments through carefully designed group-specific and work-based curricula which would be integrated as part of development activity. They would also take advantage of the cultural and other group characteristics in the process of involving the learner groups to participate in, and benefit from, adult education programmes.

"21.24 While designing this programme, the lot of the weaker sections like women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and agricultural labourers as well as slum dwellers would be given priority. The strategy in these cases would be the development of methods and contents suited to the varied needs and situations, thus promoting flexibility in the programme and in the means of delivery of education. It would also help to involve voluntary agencies of established repute; such agencies have shown a great capacity to innovate effectively and their involvement will be useful where culture-specific improvisations are required."

"27.27 The functional literacy programme would be expanded, specifically in areas having low female literacy rates. Special non-formal educational programmes will be introduced for girls in the age-group 15-20 years who could not complete formal schooling earlier. Every effort will be made to ensure that at least one third of trainees under the TRYSEM programme are girls. Special Krishi, Udyog and Van Vigyan Kendras will be established for women."

A study of the Sixth Five-Year Plan enables one to suggest the following modalities for a successful adult education programme:

1. Adult education is to be an integral part of the basic Minimum Needs Programme.
2. All illiterate persons of the age group 15-35 are to be covered within the present decade.
3. Sustained and planned efforts are necessary to link literacy with development.
4. The programme is to be flexible and closely related to the needs of the learners and their environment.
5. There should be emphasis on the participation of women in the programme.
6. The programme for the scheduled castes and other deprived sections of the society should pay attention to their special problems.
7. The adult education programme for the scheduled tribes should be in the tribal language where necessary, and pay special attention to their special cultural heritage and crafts.
8. The programme has to share the interest and involvement of voluntary agencies devoted to social welfare and rural development.
9. The whole range of mass media should be fully exploited for the programme, involving INSAT, films, Doodarshan and AIR.

10. There is an urgent necessity for suitable literature needed for post-literacy and continuing education and steps should be taken to produce the same.

11. The efficiency and quality of the programme should be a continuing concern for everyone.

12. The entire community should be involved in the programme and the idealism, devotion, dedication and commitment of the people, especially the youth, should be harnessed.

Emerging Trends

The Government has adopted a two-fold strategy for eradicating illiteracy in the shortest possible time. This strategy includes considerable increase in provision for elementary education for school going children and strengthening of adult education programmes. In the provision for elementary education there is clear emphasis on creating non-formal education system as it has been found to be most suitable to cater to the large drop-outs from the formal system as well as those who due to poverty cannot avail of the opportunities of the formal system. The adult education programme is also a non-formal strategy to fight illiteracy and ignorance. The trend which is evident in this programme could be summarised as follows:

1. Although the present adult education programme lays emphasis on the weaker sections of society, like, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes* and landless agricultural labourers and slum dwellers, the Sixth Five-Year Plan re-emphasises the need for designing adult education programmes which would improve the lot of the weaker sections mentioned above. The future programmes would therefore, naturally, have to think more seriously of devising curriculum and material to meet the varied needs of these groups. The methodology of adult education will have to be reviewed in order to enable these persons to benefit from this programme. It appears that, in spite of the best efforts, the adult education programme has not been able to bring in its fold the weaker sections to the extent it was desired. A new strategy is, therefore, being advocated which will enable them to receive the benefit of the adult education programme. It is possible that the present learning arrangements may have to undergo considerable changes in order to meet the needs of these groups. Experience shows that even now in many places the members of the weaker sections are either not welcome or they hesitate to attend the common adult education centres. In future, therefore, one may have to think of even taking the centres to the smaller groups or even families so that these people are able to overcome their handicaps.

2. The literacy data shows that there continues to be a wide gap between literacy rates for men (46.74%) and those of women (24.88%). It is, therefore, felt that ways and means should be devised to bring more women into the fold of adult education. There had been resistance to women's education from conservative elements. The women's literacy programmes, therefore, are likely to include for the vast majority of them those skills which will enable them to become better housewives. In addition there have been certain areas of skill training both for small scale cottage industries as well as agriculture which have so far not been given due importance in the plans of adult education for women. The emphasis now appears to be that women's education would include not only literacy but also training in various vocational skills which would enable them not only to achieve equality of status with men but also make them a productive component in the society. This will enable half of the population of the country, which has been denied opportunities to play its due role in the socio-economic development, to make its own contribution in the fields which have so far been only the preserve of men.

3. The linkage between literacy and development has continued to elude the implementors of the programme. As the Sixth Five-Year Plan document states, more concrete measures will have to be devised in order to involve development agencies in the task of adult education. This perhaps would need developing programmes for specific groups engaged in development activities. In other words, the programme of adult education will have to be supportive of development departments. This, it is hoped, will bring about a better integration of literacy activities with development programmes.

4. There is likely to be greater emphasis on the qualitative improvement of the programme. In spite of the best efforts, the programme, by and large, has remained a literacy programme. Even the aspect of literacy has not achieved the desired quality. There are indications that there would be a greater emphasis to improve the quality of this programme through better training and graded teaching/learning materials.

5. There are several areas of national concern. The Government is keen that the areas of national concern are shared by the people and it is through people's participation that Government intends to solve the

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* Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes - Socially and economically deprived section of the population recognised by the Government.

problems related to these areas. Some of the most important areas of national concern are population explosion, environmental pollution, agricultural production, health and national integration. The adult education programme will have to increasingly reflect these national concerns. This might require revision of curricula, materials and training strategies. The use of adult education for promoting national philosophy and thinking, in fact, is recognition of the fact that adult education can become an important means of integrating these areas of national concern in all aspects of adult education.

6. Efforts should be made to bring in integration in the delivery of services at the field level with a view to strengthen the existing mechanism for delivery of services at the State, District, Block and Village levels. Specially there is a need for coordinated and concerted effort for linking programmes under health, social welfare, water supply, food, rural development, education and development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes etc. This in the long run will also reduce costs, optimise utilisation of the available resources of funds, personnel and effective implementation of these inter-related programmes.

7. The nation is making rapid strides in the use of mass media and it is important that this new technology is made use of to fight the evils of ignorance and illiteracy. The future of adult education programme, to a great extent, will depend on the proper use of mass media, including the INSAT when it is launched into orbit. The future challenge, therefore, is of devising ways and means of making use of these media and channels of communication for the adult education programme. This would again need production of software, guide books, supportive teaching-learning materials and new training strategies.

8. A committee under the Chairmanship of the late Shri J.P. Naik was appointed to suggest ways and means of making learning arrangements for those who would complete their initial stage of literacy. It means a comprehensive plan for post-literacy and continuing education. The recommendations of the J.P. Naik Committee are very comprehensive and, if put into practice effectively, will meet the needs of millions of neo-literates and prevent them from relapsing into illiteracy. Some of the important recommendations of this Committee are:

   i. Starting of village continuing education centres

   ii. Mobile libraries and continuing education units

   iii. Need-based continuing education courses

   (These courses are supposed to help a neo-literate to achieve levels of literacy equivalent to V or VIII standard of the formal system. These courses would be normally offered to those who intend to attain equivalency certificates in order to join either the formal system of education or use these for entering into the job market where such qualifications are prescribed. In addition to these courses, it has been proposed that special courses of short duration may be organised to meet the specific interests of the neo-literates depending upon their age, profession and location)

   iv. Follow-up activities through students

   (This requires involvement of university students to cover small groups of families.)

These recommendations when implemented would give a lot of stability to the whole adult education programme and provide more opportunities of building up a cadre of adult education workers.

There continues to be an emphasis on the involvement of voluntary organisations which have traditions of working with the people.

9. The quality and strength of the programme largely depend upon the ability of our instructors. By and large, our instructors are not well qualified and the remuneration is technically considered as an honorarium only. Some of the instructors are also educated unemployed youth and, for them the adult education programme is a temporary occupation before they are able to get more secure and remunerative jobs elsewhere. All this has resulted in a large turnover of our instructors which has resulted in breakdown of learning arrangements in several centres. Several State Governments have thought of ways of giving incentives to these instructors so that they continue to work in adult education. Most of these incentives are non-monetary in nature. Some States have given them preference for their admission to teachers' training programmes, while others give them preference over others for selection as supervisors. Many women instructors have been provided with sewing machines which, although are meant to provide tailoring skills to women learners, become an asset for the instructors. The merger of several delivery systems is also being advocated in order to add to the reumeration of one multi-purpose worker. The question of improvement of the instructor's lot is receiving serious attention of the implementing agencies.

10. The whole area of urban workers's education continues to

receive the same emphasis. Polyvalent Education Centre (Shramik Vidyapeeth) is envisaged to be an institution of continuing nonformal education for urban, industrial, plantation workers and miners. There are at present 14 such Centres. Its primary responsibility is to explore, innovate, work out alternatives, by new methodologies and thus meet the needs of different groups of workers through programmes of education and training. These programmes also include in their fold families of these workers as well as unemployed youth to increase their employability. In fact, it is likely that in future greater emphasis may be placed on the education of the workers in the organised as well as informal sectors. This is one area in which the linkage of literacy with work is increasingly being realised by employees as well as the employers.

11. So far, the informal system has played a marginal role in the programmes of nonformal education, particularly for adults. For a massive programme of adult education, it is necessary to fully involve the formal system of education. The government has already taken the initiative to involve the formal system through university programme of adult education, National Service Scheme and making adult education as one of the areas of work experience at the secondary school level. It is possible that, in future, increasing emphasis would be laid to utilise the physical facilities and expertise of the formal system in implementing this programme.

Thus adult education programme in India is moving in this direction to achieve the desired national objectives.

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NATIONAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMME

GIVE WILLINGLY OF YOUR TIME AND LABOUR.— TEACH HIM TO READ AND WRITE SO THAT HE IS ABLE CLEARLY TO APPRECIATE HOW THE HANDICAP OF ILLITERACY CONTRIBUTES TO THE DISABILITIES HE IS OBLIGED TO SUFFER

"CAMPAIGNING FOR LITERACY" IN BANGLADESH

M. ANWAR HOSSAIN

COUNTRY REPORT ON MASS EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

1. Introduction

Islam made education obligatory for all irrespective of sexes and ages. The Prophet Mohammed (S.M.) time and again emphasised upon the need for education.

To make education compatible to the social needs, and to achieve that objective, the constitution of Bangladesh has provided for creating trained and dedicated citizens through a people-oriented education system. The constitution has also provided for removal of illiteracy within a specified period to be determined by law. The 19 point Programme of the Government provided for making the country "free from the course of illiteracy". These policies have been defined in terms of global national objectives in order to extend the right to education to all sorts of inequalities.

2. Basic Data

Area		55,598 sq. miles (143,998 sq.km)
Population (Million)		87.00
Rate of Growth		2.36%
Density per sq. mile		1675
Literacy Rate		23%
Enrolment (million)		
	Primary	8.2
	Secondary	2.0
	Higher	0.15
Total No. of Illiterate		52 million

3. Past Performances

Mass literacy was first introduced in Bangladesh in the district of Sylhet in 1940. But the Programme could not make headway for want of organisation and paucity of funds. However, a pilot project was started in 1964 in four Thanas and subsequently 4 more Thanas were included in the programme in 1967 with limited scope and facilities. The Programme was developed in cooperation with the cooperative societies by starting separate Adult Education Centres for male and female.

The scheme undertook training of workers and teachers and imparted literacy in agriculture, cooperatives, family planning, public health and poultry and livestock. The project developed 9 text books, 55 follow-up books on different subjects, 3 teacher guides, one chart, posters and pamphlets for motivation. The total number of Adult Education Centres stopd at 1639 under the Project. Among these 747 were for the male and 713 for the females. One teacher was provided for each Centre. During the period from 1964 to 1979 a total of 139763 illiterate adults received literacy education from the Adult Education Centres. About 40% of them were female. A review of the census reports of 1961 and 1974 shows that there was an improvement in literacy in the project areas. Rise in literacy from 18% in 1961 to 26% in 1974 is higher than the national literacy rate. Still the progress was so slow that it called for much more intensive and effective programmes for elimination of illiteracy.

4. A crash Programme on Mass Education covering the period from January 1980 to June 1980 was formally inaugurated on 21 February 1980. The basic objectives of the programme were as follows:

(a) Enrolment of 10 million illiterate learners in literacy programmes

(b) Distribute the literacy primers free of cost to the learners and teachers

(c) Formation of at least two squads of literacy teachers consisting of 3 - 5 members for each village

(d) Setting up of an organisational structure from the national to the village level

The following were the achievements of the crash programme:

(a) 10 million primers were printed and about 9 million were distributed throughout the country

(b) 150,000 literacy squads were formed and literacy centres started functioning

5. On-going Mass Education Programme Under Second Five Year Plan (1980-1985)

The experience gathered during the implementation period of the crash programme showed that mere literacy is not enough for a citizen; rather he needs functional education to participate in the developmental activities of the country.

It was felt that minimum functional literacy is the essential pre-requisite for development of the people and their environment. This has been duly recognized in the Second Five Year Plan 1980-81 to 1984-85 in which appropriate emphasis has been

laid on human development through suitable mass education programmes. By becoming literate people can:

(a) Meaningfully participate in development activities

(b) Understand better and intelligently the practice of fast changing technology, which contributes to development

(c) Raise their quality of life, including improved economic activities and gains

(d) Build literate citizenry suitable for democratic society

(e) Expedite the processes for realization of their rights and privileges

6. The Government of Bangladesh identified the high rate of illiteracy as one of the greatest problems confronting the country. The Government declared "eradication of illiteracy" as the Second phase of peaceful national revolution. A National Programme of mass education entitled "Mass Education Programme" was launched under the SFYP period. This programme is the most comprehensive and methodical scheme on mass education in Bangladesh.

7. The objectives of the schemes are as follows:-

1) To eradicate illiteracy in 40 million people among out-of-school youths and adults both male and female, particularly between 11 - 45 years of age, within the next five years

2) To enable the illiterate clients to:

(a) Acquire functional literacy and numeracy sufficient (i) to read and understand the Bangla Desh Paper and simple useful information relating to life needs (ii) to write simple letters and (iii) to keep simple accounts involving four fundamental rules of arithmetic.

(b) Acquire fundamental knowledge and skills for intelligent civic participation.

(c) Participate in developmental activities with understanding.

8. Operational Strategy

1) The Project will be implemented throughout the entire country and will reach 40 million illiterate people, both male and female between the ages of 11 - 45 within the next five years. The rural areas as a whole and also the urban slums having greatest concentrations of people will be the focal point for its implementation and will receive special attention under the scheme.

2) The Programme will run on self-help and voluntary basis.

3) The mass education teachers will not be allowed any pay or honorarium. But there will be provisions for awards for extraordinary services at the national and other levels.

4) The different developmental Ministries of the Government, the Local Government authorities and private organisations will work unitedly and with full cooperation and coordination to make it a success.

5) The responsibility for the organisation of the programme at the lowest level will be the "Gram Sarkar" Municipalities and other Local Government authorities. They will propose the list of potential learners, appoint teachers, receive and distribute books to the teachers and motivate people to receive education.

6) The education department will bear the responsibilities for providing professional inputs in the form of

(a) printing and distributing primers and teachers' guides free of cost

(b) training the teachers and other persons actively engaged in the field

(c) monitoring, research and evaluating all aspects of the programme.

7) An organisational set-up from the Ministry of Education down to union level will take the responsibility for the proper implementation of the programme at all levels.

9. The Organisational Structure

An organisational support was deemed necessary for a massive national project. The organisational structure is seen as a fundamental strategy for implementation of nation-wide programme of mass education.

A. Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education performs the following functions:

1) To draw up national guidelines and policies on mass education programme

2) To assist the Directorate of Mass Education and subordinate officer for the implementation of policies, decisions and programmes.

B. Directorate of Primary and Mass Education

For the operational implementation of the programme, The Directorate of Primary and Mass Education has been established. This directorate is headed by a Director-General. The directorate of Primary and Mass Education has two wings - Primary Education and Mass Education, each headed by one director.

C. District Level

At the district level there are district Mass Education Officers who perform the following functions:

1) Monitor the performance of the programme

2) Review the progress of work

3) Strengthen cooperation among the operational agencies participating in the programme

4) Undertake regular inspection on the mass education activities

5) Organize training for the trainers

6) Organize seminars, workshops and such other activities at the district level

7) Act as a member - Secretary of the District Mass Education Council

District Mass Education Committee:

There is an advisory committee for mass education in every district. The committee consists of representatives from various interest groups including District Education Officer and Primary Education Officers. The Deputy Commissioner (administrative head of the district) acts as chairman, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (Literacy) acts as the vice-chairman and the District Mass Education Officer acts as member secretary of the committee. Their committee reviews the progress of implementation of mass education programmes of the district, implement decisions and suggest measures for qualitative and quantitative improvement in the programme.

10. One very distinctive feature of mass education programme in Bangladesh is that the students of the secondary schools are to take part compulsorily in the literacy campaign. Each student has to offer "Practical Experience" as a compulsory subject in both secondary and higher secondary examination. In this subject a student is required to teach 2 illiterates during the period of secondary and 2 illiterates during higher secondary. Marks are allotted on the basis of the performance of teaching.

Another remarkable feature of mass literacy campaign is the extensive use of mass media - like radio, television and newspapers in the literacy campaign. The entire country is covered by television and radio. Programmes on mass education are broadcast and telecast for one hour each. Motivational activities through drama, feature films, songs and advertisement are done. Newspapers are also active in participating in the campaign for literacy. Features, advertisement and news etc. are published in the newspaper in order to motivate people to participate in the various activities of the mass literacy programme. A proposal for publishing reading materials for new literates in important newspapers is in the offing.

11. The achievements

This is the second year of the Mass Education Programme in Bangladesh under the Second Five Year Plan. Since there has not been any evaluation of the programme it is too early to comment on the progress of implementation. But it can be safely commented that the mass education programme is carried out as a part of the national education programme of the country. The programme is based on local participation and designed according to the national culture and local needs. Both Government and private agencies are involved in the programme and there is effective coordination between them. All possible resources are being utilised for the implementation of the programme. The Mass Education Programme has been put under a protected sector where no resources could be withdrawn in times of resource constraint.

A total amount of Taka 100 million has been spent under the Second Five Year Plan out of the total allocation of Taka 500 million in the private sector. A separate directorate of Primary and Mass Education has been established and appointment of all the important posts have been made under the programme. About 7 million illiterates have registered their names in literacy centres out of which 3.5 million have been made literate. Quite a good number of villages have been declared as "free from illiteracy". Under the programme 10.25 million primers have so far been printed and distributed. Printing of more primers and follow-up and post-literacy materials are in progress. Up until now a total of 157 thousand teachers have been imparted training on mass education. Training of key persons engaged in the administration and implementation of the programme has been completed.

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CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF LITERACY IN THAILAND

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

CURRENT STATUS OF LITERACY

The latest official statistics published by the National Education Commission in 1970 indicated that 18.2% of the Thai population over ten years of age is considered illiterate, that is, not graduates of Grade 4 or unable to write their names or read a simple sentence in any language. While this figure is not too high when compared to rates in many other countries, it does amount to over 4 million people. Besides, several aspects of the country's literacy situation are rather disturbing and should not be dismissed if one is to seriously consider attempting a literacy promotion programme. Such aspects cover facts as stated below:

1. The future of illiterates includes significant numbers from all age groups, not just from the older generation.

2. Available statistical data indicate that illiteracy is more widespread in the rural as opposed to urban areas, and within the larger urban areas, e.g. the Bangkok metropolis, most illiterates are found in the slums. To put it briefly, illiteracy is highest in regions and areas where poverty prevails.

3. Since the research conducted was carried out merely by asking rather than by actually testing, it still remains a serious question as to how many people officially described as literate do indeed possess the literacy skills needed to function effectively in contemporary Thai society. For example, how many people considered literate cannot correctly fill out government forms at the district office required for establishing residency, obtaining licences and conducting other types of government business? How many cannot read and understand fully the various conditions and stipulations in loan papers, instalment plans and other legally binding documents they may sign? How many cannot read government announcements or instructions for the use of fertilizers and medicine? Although studies of literacy skill levels, defined with such functional considerations in mind, do not exist, it is not unreasonable to assume that such studies would reveal a higher percentage of the population not meeting any such standards.

4. An exhaustive research effort conducted in 1968 indicated that about 30% of Grade 4 school leavers relapsed into illiteracy within a few years after graduation. This is mainly due to the fact that in rural areas, in particular, there is virtually no written communication and information system which would provide appropriate incentives for maintenance and improvement of literacy skills.

Overall, then, the issue of illiteracy in Thailand remains critically important despite the relatively low national rate. It is recognised as one major obstacle to national development, and strong efforts must be made to eliminate it.

Types of Programs Being Implemented

At present, the functional literacy programme is subdivided into six separate projects, each one designed specifically to serve a particular group of illiterates or involves coordination with a particular agency. Details concerning these projects may be summarized as follows:

1. Regular Classrooms Project.

Classes of at least 25 students are conducted by school teachers in primary schools. The course, which is held at times and a location most convenient to adult learners, lasts 6 months (180-200 hours) and the teachers receive remuneration on an hourly basis. This project is being operated throughout the country. In 1981 around 1000 classes were conducted in 50 provinces.

2. Volunteer Walking Teachers Project.

This project was started in 1975, as it was learned through experience that in many cases the illiterates in rural areas found it impossible, because of time or distance problems, to attend regular functional literacy classes. The teachers, specially trained Grade 10 graduates, ideally must organize 2 classes per day, five days per week. During their spare time they are supposed to take part in other community development activities. When literacy needs in one area have been met the teacher moves to another area. This project, allowing for much flexibility of implementation since the number of participants may be as small as 3, who may choose to meet at times and frequencies convenient to them, allows the literacy programme to reach a large number of illiterates in remote rural areas.

3. Buddhist Monks as Teachers Project.

Based on the traditional role of Buddhist monks as teachers this project was started as an experimental project in 1976, with 13 monks. Since then the project has been a success with more than 70 monks operating in the north of Thailand.

4. Hill Tribe Volunteer Walking Teachers Project.

The Department cooperates with the Department of Public Welfare in providing a literacy programme for the hill tribes who constitute one of the most important minority groups in the country. The programme is designed to improve the quality of hill tribe life and develop functional reading, writing and

arithmetic skills, and at the same time to instill a sense of attachment to Thailand, for the purpose of national security.

5. Teachers College Student-Teachers Project.

With the cooperation of the Department of Teacher Training, a number of student-teachers from various teachers colleges throughout the country carry out their practical training in functional literacy classes in addition to primary schools. Hence, the project not only enables the Department to reach a larger target population at lower cost, it also utilizes personnel and resources available at existing teachers colleges. In addition, it also provides student-teachers with opportunities to gather first-hand experience in nonformal education.

6. Military Recruits Project.

The Department of Nonformal Education gives assistance to the Supreme Command in training military personnel as literacy teachers and provides learning materials for them to teach illiterate recruits who constitute quite a significant number among those drafted into the armed forces.

NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR LITERACY PROMOTION IN THE 1980'S

Policies and Goals

1. National Economic and Social Development Plan.

The Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan for the period 1982-1986, which has recently been promulgated, claims to differ from previous plans in that

- it is based on selected priority areas for programme planning by both the government and private sectors;
- its emphasis is on 'solving problems of backward poverty-stricken rural population' so that they can participate in increasing national production;
- it is accompanied by a reform of the government's development administration especially at the provincial and lower levels in order to facilitate decision-making and follow-up of operations.

In order to achieve the planned economic development, the Plan sets up goals for social structure and services development. Among them are

- Decreasing the population growth rate to 1.5% in 1986;
- Decreasing the illiteracy rate from 14.5% of the total population in 1981 to 10% in 1986;
- Universalizing elementary education by 1986;
- Providing nonformal education to 7.5 million people;
- Providing clean water to 95% of rural households;
- Eradicating severe malnutrition in children under 5 years of age and decreasing protein and calorie deficiencies in school-age children by 50%.

2. National Education Development Plan.

The specific objectives of the nonformal education development plan include

- An expansion of nonformal education services along the line of the lifelong education concept for all ages and both sexes;
- Greater distribution of resources to rural localities and a mobilization of local resources and private sector resources for nonformal education;
- The development of good citizens with suitable vocations, capable of critical thinking, working and problem solving.

3. Interpretation.

From the above plans, it can be seen that the government realizes that the literacy rate, the elementary education attendance rate and other health and nutrition indicators are essential ingredients of national development and that services in these fields must be provided alongside and in proportion to other incentives for increased economic production and income distribution.

Along with the plan, the government has identified 246 districts in 37 provinces as target areas for development. They represent the poorest areas of the country. The Education Development Plan has made a separate rough survey of illiteracy rates, child mortality rates and per c apita income of all provinces, and, as expected, came up with an almost identical list of priority provinces for educational development.

Literacy promotion, therefore, has to be selective-intensive so as to comply with the policy guidelines. At the same time, the principles and basic assumptions of literacy work will remain as before, i.e. as a part of a lifelong education cycle to build a society of learners. It is functional literacy in that sense.

The government, however, has come to the realization that government funds alone will not be sufficient to cope with a task of this size. Rough calculations indicate that 2 million illiterates will have to be reached within the next five years. It will therefore seek to mobilize private and local resources for development work. A proposed reform of development administration structures down to the subdistrict and village levels will delegate more authority and decision-making to lower levels and thus strengthen community-based planning and management.

Strategies

The responsibility for literacy promotion is presently shared between the Department of Nonformal Education and the National Primary Education Commission, both within the Ministry of Education.

1. Formal Education

With the new curriculum content and procedure, primary education services will be expanded to remote rural areas and more effort will be put into improving the quality of education and into reducing the average 14.5% drop out rate throughout the six-year compulsory school programme.

2. Nonformal Education

At present illiterate out-of-school adults who are over 14 years of age are under the responsibility of the Department of Nonformal Education. A more rapid expansion of literacy work means expansion of recruitment, supervision and resources, for which steps and procedures will have to be worked out. If literacy is a tool for lifelong education with an impact on economic development (as is assumed in the National Economic and Social Development Plan), then all other agencies involved in nonformal education and development must have a share in promoting literacy. Social, rather than monetary, incentives will have to be devised for both teachers and learners. The Department of Nonformal Education should act as a coordinating office for all efforts and direct them towards achieving the common goal.

Post-literacy efforts will also be strengthened, especially those that provide reading facilities and materials for new literates. Production of such materials will have to increase in proportion with the literacy effort.

Procedures

1. Establishment of Criteria and Survey of Target Groups

The National Education Commission and the Department of Nonformal Education will collaborate in identifying the nature and size of literacy problems. If planning is to be conducted efficiently, answers must be found to the following questions.

- How much reading and writing and numeracy does one need in order to be functionally literate in Thai society?
- Who are the illiterates?
- Where are they located?

It is expected that the answers to such questions will be an unpleasant surprise for planners as the numbers will in all probability exceed those used at present.

2. Mobilisation of Resources and Mapping Out Responsibilities

The National Education Commission will convene a meeting of relevant agencies to discuss literacy promotion and to consider various alternative plans for the attainment of targets and to delegate responsibilities for implementation. If needed, an inter-agency coordinating body will be set up to oversee the task.

3. Implementation

Full-scale implementation should be in place by 1983. Follow-up and supervision will be done by the Provincial Nonformal Education Centres under the Department of Nonformal Education. Evaluation and other necessary research will be the responsibility of the National Education Commission.

CRUCIAL PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN

Some problems may be regarded as crucial in Thailand's situation in connection with the literacy campaign:

1. The illiterates live in scattered areas. It is really difficult to find them in sufficient number to form a class (i.e 20-25). In one village, there may be perhaps two or three illiterates. It is not unusual to find a class with very few illiterates, the rest being those who have already attended the four year elementary school but are still in need of improving their literacy skills. The cost of running the programme per head, if the number of the illiterates is taken into consideration, is quite high.

Solutions to the above problem may be made as follows:

A. Establishing more boarding schools for children of the

disadvantaged groups, i.e. those living in scattered, remote areas. A number of such schools has been established but the cost of establishing and running such a school is comparatively high.

B. Using the walking teacher volunteers as mentioned earlier. The walking teacher volunteer is paid the same salary as he would get when he first takes the civil service post. The volunteer will teach several groups in several places, depending on his ability to travel.

However, this type of volunteer does not solve the problem of higher cost of running the literacy programme. We usually find that the class or group taught by the walking teacher volunteer still consists of many people who have already attended the four-year compulsory primary school. In other words, instead of teaching 20-25 illiterates in different villages, he may teach 5-6 illiterates and 15 or more literates. This has happened because of the scattered habitation of the illiterates themselves.

C. Using the more low paid or non-paid volunteers. This category includes the Buddhist monk, the student teacher, the secondary school graduate. Since the remuneration paid to such people is lower than the preceding category, it is one alternative to make the programme costs lower.

We are thinking about the non-paid volunteers as another alternative. Such volunteers may be the members of the village defence corps - usually known as the village scouts. The leader of the movement expressed his willingness to help our organisation in carrying out nonformal education programmes. With proper contact, we hope the contribution from the village scouts will be free. Each village scout may teach one, two or three illiterates. Since there is no remuneration, the programme cost will be very low - only on materials and training.

D. Use of radio in the literacy programme. This may be another way to reach the illiterates living in scattered, remote areas. It may also reach all illiterates in all areas regardless of the number of the illiterates in such places. For example, if there are as few as two or three persons, they still have a chance to take the literacy course by radio.

Further exploration on techniques of using such media for the literacy programme is needed.

2. A number of the Thai population are non-Thai speaking. They are the hill-tribes in the North and the Malay-speaking Thai Muslims in the South. The hill-tribes groups number around 350,000, the Thai Muslims 1.3 million. Altogether the two major groups numbering 1.7 million constitute 2.7% of the country's population, the total of which is 46 million.

Programmes are specially designed to meet specific needs of the two groups as follows:

The Thai Muslims. To enable the non-Thai speaking learners to understand the Thai language prior to literacy teaching, Thai Lessons by Radio have been put in the regular broadcast programme of the government radio station. The learners can learn independently or in groups as they wish.

The literacy programme for the non-Thai speaking Thai Muslims has been specially prepared to suit the cultural context of the learners. They start reading their own dialect in the Thai scripts and transfer the ability of script reading to the Thai language literacy text book later on.

The Hill-Tribes. There are eight major hill-tribes in Thailand, i.e. the Meo, the Yao, the Karen, the Lisu, etc. A special literacy programme has been prepared for them. Also a special programme administration has been designed. In each operation unit, there is a nuclear village and several satellite villages. The nuclear village is an administrative and supervisory post manned by one or two qualified teachers, while the satellite villages are each manned by one volunteer. This system helps to make technical assistance available to the volunteers in surrounding villages.

3. The vicious cycle of poverty. It has been found that where poverty prevails, illiteracy correspondingly prevails. Poor people are illiterate because they were unable to attend the full four-year compulsory primary education course when they were young. This problem is more economic than educational. However, for the adult illiterates, economic development and literacy education can be carried out together - that is while the people are engaged in economic activities to support their living; they may also find time to learn literacy.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SEMINAR

It is still too early to say definitely and exactly what we have learned and would like to apply in our literacy programme. However, we would suggest the following points to be included, among others, in our future literacy planning.

1. First, we have learned about the part the political will has played in literacy campaigns in many countires. We have depended more on the professional people to plan and allocate resources for us. This does not mean the national development plan is made without the help of the politicians. With a strong professional planning staff, quite a stable plan can be made, regardless of change of politicians. If the social policy, agreed by a majority of political parties, can be established, the long-term national economic and social development plan can be also developed and such a plan, regardless of

political changes, will still remain effective.

However, the term 'political will' should not be interpreted as the politicians' will, but also the professional's conscientious will, and best of all the people's will from their own felt needs. The interaction of the will expressed by different groups of the population forms into the 'political will' by creating social awareness among professionals, the people and so on.

2. We agree to a certain extent that literacy is not only the tool to acquiring knowledge, but also the process of change. The learner by way of participation and inquiry is himself a different person. His perception of himself and the world will be different from what it is. But to bring about this result, the process of literacy education must not be just instructional, but essentially interactional and dialogical. Therefore the training of literacy teachers is extremely important.

3. We view follow-up post-literacy programmes to be indispensable and equally important. Without follow-up, continuing, post-literacy programmes, most of the new literates will relapse into illiteracy in a few months' time. Therefore, we would strongly support such follow-up programmes as rural libraries, rural newspaper reading centres, rural broadcasts, interest groups, skills training etc.

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เวลา 3 นาฬิกา

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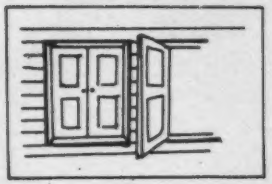

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Extracts from Functional Literacy Handbook produced by the Department of Nonformal Education, Thailand

CASE STUDIES: PRESENTED TO CAMPAIGNING FOR LITERACY SEMINAR

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

The work of eradicating illiteracy and raising the people's cultural standards, carried out for 35 years in Vietnam, has scored encouraging results.

Out of a backward colonial country with more than 90% of the population illiterate, Vietnam has become a completely independent state with over 90% of the population fully freed from illiteracy, a great number of youths finishing secondary education (of 1st and 2nd degrees). Before the August revolution (1945) there were merely 500 university students in the whole country, the number of intellectuals could be counted on the fingers. At present our universities and colleges are seating a student body of more than 80,000 and have already turned out tens of thousands of qualified cadres...

1. The eradication of illiteracy and the complementary education in Vietnam have been carried out mainly in wartime circumstances.

Our patriotic war lasted for 30 years. Some may have thought the development of education was impossible in the wartime, and in fact, during the Second World War, education in many countries had ceased.

But our Party and government kept stressing the educational work where possible in spite of the protracted war.

The motto "Fight, work and study at the same time" was put into practice and during all the past 30 years there had been no cancelling of any graduation examinations and all the educational branches grew ever better.

During the war against old colonialism, our people in many villages kept attending classes in the evening and fought their enemy's operation in the day-time, and for them "learning also means fighting the enemy".

The same can be said about the period against neo-colonialism; people in many parts of the country kept going to class conducted in deep trenches and tunnels after their battles against air attacks; the motto "go to class under the bombing", "drown out the bombing with singing", could be heard everywhere.

At times the classrooms were bombarded and there were casualties. But the people's campaign only gained more momentum, and more interesting about these popular classes was that the learners were not only provided with the reading and writing skills but also with adequate understanding against bombings and chemical weapons.

Our wartime complementary education had helped train out tens of thousands of cadres with primary and secondary education standards capable of accomplishing their tasks and had provided tens of thousands of youths with scientific and technical knowledge required in fighting and production.

Our 30 years old adult education has freed more than 15 million labourers from illiteracy. That and the development of general education for the children have explained why 90% of our population are now literate. Our eradication of illiteracy has, in fact, made its worthy contribution to the liberation of the country.

2. The anti-illiteracy work in Vietnam is a mass campaign.

The literacy work in Vietnam has experienced 4 big campaigns, each having encouraged millions of people to go to school; in 1946 alone, more than 3 million were freed from illiteracy, and nine million within the next 9 years against old colonialism. The anti-illiteracy campaign in 1956-1958 alone had brought literacy to over 2 million. After the liberation of the South approximately 1.5 million became literate.

The literacy work in Vietnam is, thus, not selective but massive, with the participation of both the learner and the teacher. It is massive, because first and foremost the political guide-lines are sound and timely.

Right after the August Revolution our late President Ho Chi Minh and our young State had stressed that illiteracy was one of the nastiest left-overs from the colonial regime, as colonialism resorts to "obscurantism" as a means with which to rule the colonial peoples. The people are now the masters of their own country, therefore they must be freed from ignorance. And our President Ho Chi Minh attached the same importance to the eradication of illiteracy as to the annihilation of the aggressors. Moreover, the illiterates among labouring people are large in number, the selective measures could never do, and the work could only be accomplished with mass campaigns.

These campaigns were carried out mainly on the basis of the people's consciousness, their confidence in the Revolution. And these campaigns were often launched on the occasions of historic events, such as: the triumph of the August Revolution, the victory at Dien Bien Phu or the liberation of the South and the reunification of the country.

When everyone's in high spirit, his participation in the campaign is often voluntary. Many of the young intellectuals took an active part in the illiteracy campaigns; many of them voluntarily left cities for remote villages in spite of all hardships wishing to bring literacy to their countrymen. They have set up a lot of bright examples such as old Mrs Tu aged 70 rowing to teach literacy classes, or Y Zung, a young girl of 18 leaving her city for the mountainous villages as a literacy teacher, or Miss Nguyet Trag who was drowned crossing the river on a stormy

night while going to a literacy class, and such as Son and Thien murdured by hooligans while going through a forest to a literacy class in Dak Lak province.

Imbued with the policies of the government and aware of their new life faced from ignorance, many old people of 60 or 70 attended literacy classes regularly and were able to read and write. And they themselves were an effective source of encouragement to their children.

Once the campaign was massive, all the difficulties in material could be easily overcome with all kinds of initiatives.

That constitutes the key to success in every literacy campaign in Vietnam.

3. The central aim of literacy work in Vietnam is first of all to enable the people to read and write the Quoc Ngu (National script).

The final aim in raising the people's cultural standard is, of course, to provide them with knowledge useful for life and work, but it takes a long course of time and it can also be achieved by various means: school attendance, listening to lecturers, self-education etc.

The Vietnamese educational workers, have realized that the first step of importance is to rapidly enable the people to read and write their national script and considered these skills the most essential means to their further education.

When the learners are able to read and write they can continue their learning by either attending follow-up classes or self-teaching by means of reading newspapers and books.

Therefore, in our working out of a syllabus for all levels ranging from primary to secondary we lay much emphasis on the improvement of the methods of teaching reading and writing Vietnamese, enabling the learner to acquire literacy in the shortest possible time.

Our experience has shown that a cultural mass campaign should not be too long, as the learners will be disheartened when they find themselves still unable to read newspapers on their own after a long period of time, and hence the breakdown of the campaign.

At the early stage we do not introduce in great quantity the functional and professional knowledge in the curriculum, but concentrate on implementing the reading and writing skills by means of interesting and substantial texts. After many improvements and modifications we have been able to reduce the time required for the acquisition of the two skills from 1 year to 6 months, then 3 and 4 months. Our latest method can enable

the learner to read and write within 35 days with 25 lessons, hence reducing the expenses of text-book publications.

When the learner is able to read with ease and fluency, he may carry on his study with a happier heart and ensure his literacy, enriching his knowledge of life and production.

Those learners who due to different reasons, cannot continue post-literacy schooling may consolidate their reading and writing skills by reading newspapers, so the possibility of relapse into illiteracy is scarce. The relapse only takes up 3-5% and mainly among old people and minority groups whose contact with new culture is scarce.

Launching a campaign is really important, but maintaining it is even far more important. Apart from the booming of a campaign there must be a frequent maintenance by incentives from the State and the people by means of the exchanges of experience, investigations, conferring of recommendations papers or medals etc.

In spite of all these initiatives, the interrelation between the content, method of study and the literacy campaign always takes the first importance. The good methods and sound content will speak up for the learner's progress.

At the present time, 90% of our population are able to read and write, those remaining illiterate are mainly in the mountainous regions. And in the delta provinces the labouring people are continuing their learning in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades.

Besides 2,000 on-the-job schools for our youths and cadres, we are now operating more than 200 concentrated intensive complementary education schools for 50,000 students within that coverage. The annual body of adult learners both on-the-job and concentrated, comes up to one million.

***

"Continue the eradication of illiteracy among the remaining illiterate, raise the people's cultural standard, set the criteria for the best cadres' and youths' standards at a required level."

To accomplish this, in the next two 5-year plans, we expect to carry out the following:

1) Organize literacy campaign in the minority groups

Our government has offered to help the minority groups to develop their own culture. For those groups having their own written languages, literacy work can be done with these languages as languages of literacy. For those not having their own written language, or on a voluntary basis, Vietnamese can be the language of literacy hence facilitating the commun-

ication between different nationalities. We have successfully carried out a research and experiment on teaching Vietnamese to minority people through 4 grades. Nevertheless, the organisation of schools and the recruitment of teachers remain a difficulty. The literacy work in mountainous regions will be done step by step with the local cadres' good command of Vietnamese then the common language of the people.

2) Continue the popularization of primary education for people in the deltas and in newly liberated provinces of the South.

The popularized primary education covers 3 post-literacy grades. The popularization aims at strengthening literacy and providing the learner with further understanding of technology, production and new way of life, of the 4 fundamental calculations and fundamental knowledge of geography and history.

Our experience has shown that the learners often grow self-complacent when they are once able to read and write, so the number of learners mobilized drops by 40-50% as compared with the first stage. More attention has been paid to the young people in the age-group under 40. We expect to popularize primary education to all people in the deltas in 5 or 10 years time.

3) Organize talks and lectures on professional and technical questions for rural inhabitants.

Our investigation has shown that the rural population do not actively take part in library and club activities. To supply them with an understanding of practical life and production, we have experimentally carried out talks on scientific problems for one year now with good results and will continue for another year before the widespread movement in different provinces.

The problems which interest the rural population are often substantial, ranging from rice planting, pig raising, family planning, hygiene, prophylaxis, birth control, to the prevention of electrocution etc. To achieve this, we have surmounted many difficulties in terms of material; film strips, projector, electricity and the printing of the documents.

4) Ensure the continued schooling for excellent cadres and youths.

There exists at present, the system of concentrated, well-organized schools for village and district cadres. But some key cadres cannot leave their work, for they are fully occupied. And they should arrange so that every one of them can go to school in turn. At the same time there must be spare-time classes to facilitate their regular attendance.

We are making every effort so that in 5 or 10 years' time all village cadres will have acquired a secondary level knowledge

of agricultural technology, district cadres and young elites will have acquired a tenth-form knowledge and a high school level knowledge of science and technology. Our state has set up such criteria for the cadres to strive for.

To accomplish this we have adopted such measures as:

1. Place the problem of the adult learner's psychology in consideration and attach significance to the problem as an important subject under research for the committee for the Reform of Adult Education. The final aim of the research is to work out the syllabus and text-books suited to the characteristic and needs of the adults and useful for the real life.

2. Speed up the training of literacy and complementary education teachers. There must be refresher courses annually. We are now considering whether to train this kind of teacher in our formal teachers' training schools so as to acquaint them with their future work.

3. We will coordinate more closely with different organisations such as the youth union, trade union, women's union in the adult education field, and at the same time take a good advantage of other economic branches.

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[P.85, Bhola, Chapter V, para 1]

The Mass Literacy Campaign of Viet Nam 1945-1977

The mass literacy campaign of Vietnam was indeed a series of four campaigns, three of those conducted in the North and one in the South, after the unification of North and South Vietnam in April 1975. The first campaign was launched within two months of the August 1945 Revolution. During October 1945 and December 1946, it is known to have reached some 3,020,000 people. The second campaign lasted from June 1948 to June 1950 and covered an impressive 8,109,600 people. The third campaign in the North was conducted during 1956-58 and reached 2,161,300, including some 231,700 people belonging to ethnic minorities, living in the mountains. By the year 1958, illiteracy had been eradicated from North Vietnam, except for a few far-off regions in the mountains. The unification of the North and the South, put literacy again on the national agenda. A fourth campaign thus came into being which during 1976-77, reached 1,321,600 people....

[Extract from Bhola, p.105-106, Chapter V]

National conferences were also used to bring together all the principal actors from various levels of the enterprise and to engage in self evaluation and in the evaluation of the results. One such conference was the one organized in 1976 to evaluate the results of the campaign in the South.

The effects of the Vietnamese campaign. The effects of the Vietnamese campaign have been both significant and far-reaching. The country did succeed in creating a new political culture; wherein it was possible to mobilize the will of the people to defeat a determined and superior war machine. It was able to create within less than a decade, at least in the North, a literate voting public.

There were important consequences of literacy in terms of the productivity and health of the nation as well as on the participation of the women in the work force and in public affairs.

Lessons from the Vietnamese literacy campaign

1. The power of commitment born of an ideology is quite obvious in the success of this literacy campaign. Also the campaign got its legitimization and support from the highest levels of power. The President, Ho Chi Minh, was the patron saint of the campaign throughout the time it was being waged.

2. The Vietnamese campaign tells us that with determination no set of conditions is too forbidding for a successful literacy campaign. The literacy campaign did not wait for the resistance to come to an end or the war to be over. Indeed, the conditions of war strengthened the resolve of the people to become literate and better patriots.

3. The use of mass line in a mass literacy campaign is not merely a matter of mobilizing people's resources. In fact, mass campaigns can not be conducted by bureaucrats. What is needed are well trained, well disciplined cadres full of commitment and ready for sacrifices.

4. The cultural ethos of a nation helps when there is respect for education in the culture. The linguistic realities can also be material to the success of the campaign or to its problems. If most people use one language, and it is easy to teach, it is better for the success of the campaign.

5. An important lesson to learn from the Vietnamese campaign is technical. It tells us that what seems to work at the early literacy stage, does not necessarily work at the level of post-literacy. Literacy can be a mass movement built basically on the mobilization of teachers and learners by managing incentives suitably to both promote and sustain initiative. At the post-literacy stages, the program becomes more scientific and formal. Know-how is needed for the development of curricular content; there has to be more sophisticated methodology to be put to use; and instructional materials and class levels have to be more carefully differentiated.

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[Extract from Bhola, p.111-130, Chapter VI, "The Anti-Illiteracy Campaigns of the People's Republic of China, 1950-58."]

The driving force behind the campaign and its objectives

The sole driving force behind the literacy efforts of the 1950s in China was the Revolution that culminated in the declaration of the Chinese People's Republic in October 1949. The declaration of the people's republic had to be made now meaningful in terms of the lives of the peoples. The political revolution had to be complemented with and consolidated by a cultural revolution.

The cultural revolution in Marxian scheme is basically an educational revolution. Through education the masses have to be taught to shed their false consciousness, get imbued in the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideology, and to become activists in behalf of the revolution to overthrow oppression and to abolish class structures. Again, education does not have to be merely ideological, but also technological. New scientific knowledge must be learned to be put to work in the mines, factories and on the farms and collectives. Education has to become the instrument of creating the "intellectual worker" and the "worker intellectual".

As one of the early declarations of the government put it:

> *"The main task of the People's Government in cultural and education work shall be the raising of the cultural level of the people, the training of the personnel for national construction work, the eradication of feudal, comprador and fascist ideology, and the development of the ideology of service to the people." (Chen, 1953, p.554)*

The cultural revolution embodied in the preceding declaration was to be based on literacy - the essential instrument of the cultural revolution. Mao himself put it unambiguously:

> *"The necessary condition for establishing a new China is to sweep away illiteracy from the 80 percent portion of China's population....These are not ordinary conditions, nor are they conditions you can or cannot have, but, rather, they are absolutely necessary." (In Hawkins, p.90)*

Literacy is thus an absolute condition. It is first for the vanguard of the revolution - the cadres and the activists. But it is also absolutely necessary for the masses for bringing them into the political process, for their new socialization and for preparing them for work in the new scientifically based economy. Literacy has to contribute to both Redness and Expertness.

Preparation for the literacy campaigns of the fifties

If by preparation we mean statistical surveys, feasibility studies or systematic pre-testing of methods and materials, then there were none made by the Chinese government preceding their literacy promotion campaigns of the 1950s. A literacy survey was scheduled for completion as part of the national census, but results did not become available until November of 1954. The leadership thought they knew the needs of the masses and they knew how to fulfill those needs. The masses did not have to be studied or asked, especially when the national vision was to be implemented using the "mass line" and in conformity with the "local conditions".

However, if preparation is interpreted more broadly to include prior experience with similar work, perhaps on a smaller scale but in somewhat similar settings, then the literacy campaigns of the 1950s can be seen as a set of intensified mass campaigns based on earlier pilot projects conducted within areas under communist control.

Respect for the literate was not new to the Chinese culture, nor was literacy organization new to the communists who had now declared a People's Republic of China. Literacy and education had been prized in China over the millenia though only 1% to 2% of the people were literate through most of the early Chinese history. Although literacy among women was virtually non-existent, some statistics suggest that during the 18th and 19th centuries, 35-40% of the males and 2-10% of the females may have possessed some ability to read and write. (Rawski, p.23) In the decades immediately preceding the Revolution, however, literacy is known to have declined because of the disruptions wrought by foreign invasions and the civil war.....

....The Winter Study campaign of 1944 became for a while the central task of all Party and governmental work. The approach was pragmatic, flexible, sometimes even contradictory. The curricular emphasis kept on shifting from literacy to political education, to war, to production and back. Yet two important policy oriented emphases developed during this campaign. One, the education of the cadres, the vanguard of the revolution, was to come first and the education of the masses later:

> *"This is not only because cadres are the vanguard of the masses and as such are in greater need of cultivation and improvement - the objective of their cultivation and improvement is to benefit the masses - but also because there are after all, limits on the nature of the popular education that can be provided in the environment of the peasant villages." (On Regulations, p.197)*

Two, adult education was to have priority over the education of

children, though children were also to be educated when possible. The rationale behind this policy was the following:

> *"Although educating them is unavoidably difficult, by improving their situation one step through education, we can improve the situation in the war and in production one step, and the results will be immediate." (On Regulations, p.198) ...*

Mobilizing at the national level

Before referring to the typical informational and mobilizational strategies used by the Chinese in their literacy campaigns of the 1950s, it is important to understand the special meaning and function of mobilization in the Chinese society and polity.

In Maoist conception, mobilization seems not to be merely an instrumental process for disseminating information and organising public and private initiatives and resources, but it is a substantive revolutionary experience, collectively shared by the people. Teaching of literacy, improved nutrition and such may seem to be objectives for mass mobilization, but in reality these would be secondary purposes. The primary purpose of mobilization in Mao's view seems to be to invite the people to participate - if necessary bypassing the Party and the government - to have a collective experience of evaluation, analysis and renewal of revolutionary experience, to claim and reclaim the revolution for themselves and, in the process, to change their deeply held perceptions and values and their images for the future.

Having said this, we should take note of three additional ideas related to mobilization for the national campaigns of the 1950s: gradual expansion, the mass line, and responsiveness to local conditions. These three aspects of planning and implementation affected the total effort of mobilization, and later of the conduct and coverage of the campaigns.

The concept of gradual expansion had three parts to it: selection of client groups, choice of geographical areas, and priority in terms of curricular emphasis. As we have already mentioned, the cadres of worker-peasant origins were to be educated first, and education of the masses of workers and peasants had to come next. In terms of geographical areas, urban-industrial sectors got priority over rural areas. Within rural areas themselves, choices were made on the principle of "readiness". Old liberated areas where land reforms had been completed and the standard of living had somewhat improved, were offered education first; while recently liberated areas, national minority areas, disaster areas and areas close to the theatres of war had to wait for the normalization of political and economic conditions. The concept of gradual expansion was also applied to choice of curricula. Informal adult education forms such as political indoctrination was a high priority in low priority geographical areas. In other areas, curriculum would be different and much more comprehensive.

This brings us to the concept of responsiveness to local conditions. The need to respond to local conditions in the application of all educational policies was a supreme norm in the mass education effort of communist China. The First National Conference on Workers and Peasants' Education held on September 30, 1950 (as reported in the Peoples' Education, Vol. III, No.I, May 1, 1951) thus declared:

> *Our worker-peasant education must always respect local conditions and the time factor, advancing soundly step by step. China is a big country....(with) political, economic, financial and cultural development unequal in various parts .....; there are also different cultural and historical backgrounds. Therefore, top-level policy on worker-peasant education must be adapted to the different conditions prevailing in various areas....., employing concrete forms and procedures according to the local conditions at the time.....*

Finally, there was the emphasis on the "mass line". This was an ideological view, supported by economic exigencies; a combination of virtue and necessity. Mao had given the ideological line: "All work done for the masses must start from their needs and not from the desire of any individual, however, well-intentioned." But the mass line also meant that the masses had to be responsible for their own education - had to provide the resources and the organization for education in their localities.....

The conduct of the campaign

The Chinese literacy campaigns of the 1950s must be placed within an appropriate conceptual and institutional context to understand fully well their objectives, organization, conduct and contributions. The Chinese had envisioned, as their ultimate objective, a dual system of education, one for children and another for adults. There was to be a formal education system for children and a parallel formal educational system for adults for enabling adults to receive an equivalent education in their spare-time. This spare-time school system was not age-bound and was in addition an accelerated system....

The spare-time school system was the formal part of adult education which was complemented by an informal adult education system...

The actual teaching of literacy was handled by three educational organizations - spare-time schools, short-time schools an

literacy schools. Thus, it should be noted that the attack on illiteracy was spearheaded by and through adult primary education.

The administrative super-structure was complex and lines of collaboration and control are not always easily understood. Two basic principles, however, defined the temper of the system: that of "democratic centralism" and of "one leader collaborating with many." This meant horizontal collaborations between the government, the Party, army and trade unions at the various levels of administration. In terms of vertical integration, it meant a combination of guidance from the center and implementation according to the mass line.

This also meant that local communities would use their own resources in becoming literate. Lack of resources and emphasis on self-help had generated such innovations as the mass teacher and the little teacher who were the forerunners of the barefoot doctor in the health field, many years later.

Incentives and rewards were hardly ever material in nature. At the most, teachers were given release from time at work to be able to conduct their literacy classes. Keeping up with production quotas, attending political meetings and conducting literacy classes must not have been easy, but it was most often done.....

...The use of correct technique demanded that the special characteristics of the adult learner be taken into consideration and that teaching be related to the adult's real-life activities. Lecture was to be de-emphasized, but there was an emphasis on drill (this because of the particular nature of the Chinese characters), study periods, and individual help outside the classroom. The teacher was to use students in his teaching and ask them all to critique his teaching methods and learn from such critiques.

While there was a general overall interaction between literacy teaching on the one hand and politics and production on the other hand, there seems to be a clear emphasis on literacy teaching in the early stages. The process of teaching reading, recognizing and writing characters - that is of decodification and codification - was taken seriously and not diluted by functional material, it appears.

The teaching of literacy was assisted by a clear language policy and a clear cut definition of what it meant to be literate. As we have mentioned earlier, eight mutually unintelligible dialects were spoken on mainland China. The advantage, however, was that they all used the same script. They wrote the same way, only sounded what they read differently. Thus literate Chinese could read and understand each others' written messages but they could not understand each other's speech. This was

possible because the Chinese language is not a phonetic language, it is ideographic. The language contains some 50,000 characters; not even well educated people, however, typically know more than 10,000 characters.

Newspapers may use no more than 4,000 characters and those who know 1,500 characters have been considered literate. Learning these 1,500 characters is by no means a simple task. The President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences calculated that learning to read in Chinese characters took about two more years to achieve the same level of literacy than in a phonetic language.

The Chinese did three important things to help in the literacy effort. They developed a "common speech" (basically the Mandarin dialect with Peking pronunciation) - dropping words which were too literary, too elitist, or too infrequently used and parochial. They simplified the characters wherever possible reducing strokes and using abbreviations. Finally, they developed a phonetic alphabet (PINYIN), not yet to replace the Chinese characters but only to assist in the teaching of characters by annotating them phonetically. In 1957, on the New Year's Day, newspapers and most magazines began to use horizontal as opposed to vertical printing of type.....

Lessons from the campaign

The following lessons can be drawn from the Chinese experience with literacy:

1. The first lesson from the Chinese literacy campaign is inspirational. The Chinese experience is at the same time impressive and sobering. It teaches us that it is possible to plan for and implement a policy for resocializing a whole nation, of almost one billion people and a culture more than 2,000 years old, in the space of some 30 years, given the right set of conditions. Nations can be taught to think new thoughts and read and write those new thoughts. Nations can be made literate.

2. The need for an ideological commitment matched by political will of the power elite is, again, brought out by this case study. The ideology has to be a peoples' ideology, offering equality and dignity to the masses. Literacy has to be seen as serving those transcendental goals at the ideological level and more concrete political and economic goals at another level. The presence of "the Great Helmsman" such as Mao in communist China can be of great help.

3. The Chinese experience suggests allocating more than merely informational goals to mobilization. Mobilization of the masses for national literacy campaigns can provide

merely informational goals to mobilization. Mobilization of the masses for national literacy campaigns can provide for the people a collective experience of a revolutionary character. It can serve as a substitute for the nation's Long March in countries where independence may have been marked only by the change of flags, with most of the people experiencing independence as spectators.

4. The important need for a clear cut language policy, undertaking language reform where necessary, and clarifying the division of labour between the ethnic and the national languages is brought out, again, clearly in this case study.

5. Commitment to act and achieve seems to rise above lack of infrastructures, scarcity of material resources and poverty of technical sophistication. Harshness of conditions mixed with commitment and hope seems to generate innovation in organization, social roles and methodclogies.

6. Literacy is assured of success when conducted in a larger context of adult education, political socialization, abolition of class structures and economic development.

7. There is no one correct way to organize for literacy. Let a hundred flowers blossom together, and let a hundred schools of thought contend. A nation may declare a literacy campaign independently of the existing institutions of formal and nonformal education or may implement a campaign through such existing institutional structures. It may establish different priorities - vanguard versus the masses, urban versus rural, steel workers versus miners. It may practice social or geographical incrementalism. The only thing it can not do is to let the commitment dissipate, let direction get confounded, let declarations become hollow.

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[Extract from Bhola, CHAPTER VIII, p.160-61, 163-4, 168-74, 180-82.]

THE MASS LITERACY MOVEMENT IN BURMA: FROM THE 1960s INTO THE 1980s

Slowly, but surely and systematically, Burma under the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) is engaged in rooting out illiteracy from the country in its unique Burmese way.

The Revolutionary Council of the Union of Burma led by General Ne Win assumed State power in the March of 1962 after more than twelve years of factional politics and chaos of post-Independence Burma. The Policy declaration on "Burmese Way to Socialism" was issued on April 30, 1962. Socialism, the leadership declared, could not be achieved with more than one-third of the nation illiterate.

The first literacy campaign was launched in 1964 on a pilot scale in the Meiktila District. After an intensive period of experimentation during 1966-68, a new strategy for literacy promotion was adopted and a long-term plan was approved in 1969.

The Burmese mass literacy movement has some unique features that are worthy of note. For one, the literacy movement in Burma is a mass movement in terms of ultimate objectives, but it is selective and incremental in its strategy of implementation. The movement focuses on the age group 15-59 years old; and literacy work is conducted incrementally, area by area - districts and townships are selected by the Central Literacy Committee on the basis of need, readiness, accessibility and security. Another important feature of the movement is its voluntary nature and the mode of its funding. It is a budgetless campaign; though certainly a most resourceful one. It is a mass movement run by volunteers. No one associated with the movement, from the teachers in villages to those who sit as members on the Central Literacy Committee at the Center, draw any salaries, honoraria or allowances for work in the literacy movement.

In the past fifteen years of the literacy movement, more than two million illiterate adults have become literate with the help of some 300,000 volunteer teachers, reducing national illiteracy rate by some 10%, bringing it down to 30% as we enter the 1980s. But some 9 million adults are still illiterate and most children in rural areas drop out of elementary schools without completing all the grades. The struggle, therefore, goes on. Each September 8 on the International Literacy Day, new campaign areas are announced and new beginnings are made in the hope that one day September 8 will be really a day to celebrate.

The motive force and the objectives

The driving force behind the literacy movement was the Revolution of 1962 that offered the people the "Burmese Way to Socialism" under the leadership of General Ne Win. Socialism needed literacy. The 1965 seminar of the BSPP put it this way:

> *If the socialist system is to be set up, every person must have high standards of awareness of their duties and responsibilities. There must be wide knowledge. It is clear that every person must be literate for this situation to become possible. This is why the elimination of illiteracy is to be carried out on a 'mass basis'.*

Literacy was also justified in more concrete terms by the BSPP. Literacy education was to be integrated with economy, with livelihood and work; basic education was to be brought within the reach of all - children and adults. This, of course, meant both universal primary education and universal adult literacy.

The objectives for the literacy movement, as elaborated by the Burma Central Literacy Committee (BCLC) in 1969, were in these terms:

(a) to help the illiterates to gain literacy first and foremost

(b) to develop new ideas and to instill in them desirable attitudes

(c) to promote a broadened outlook on life

(d) to encourage them to participate more actively in a more progressive community

(e) to raise their productivity level and their standard of living as well

(f) to enhance the education level of the whole population, and

(g) to aid in the economic and social progress of the country.

The Burmese also wanted to create one political culture; and literacy in the Burmese language had to play an important part in bringing this about. The Burmese language had to develop one community through one language of communication and then take all these developmental messages in health and agriculture to all the people all over Burma.

The use of student volunteers each summer in the literacy movement was also meant to serve the purpose of resocializing the student community by providing them experience with

constructive work, knowledge of the rural masses and of rural life, learning the dignity of labour by actually making labour contributions and thus helping in developing the realization that "to serve others' interest is to serve one's own".

One should not miss the spiritual and moral (some might say moralistic) tone of Burmese Socialism and of the literacy movement that it has generated.

The conduct and the coverage

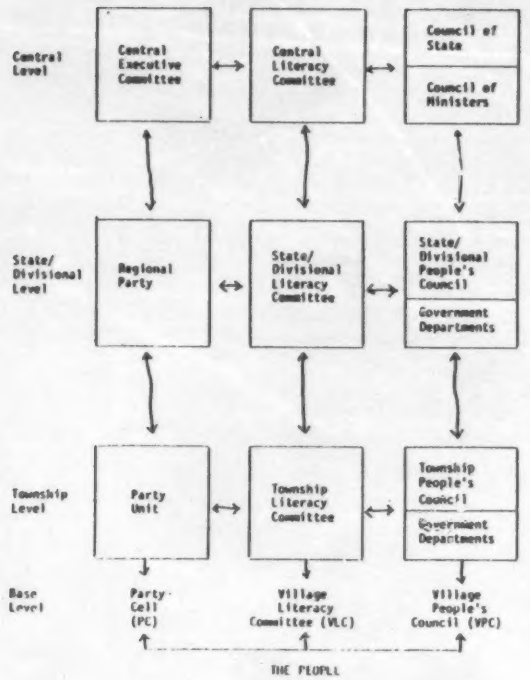
A long-term plan was drawn up in 1969 to cover 12 years over three Four-Year Plans for the country's economic and social development. The literacy strategy was now quite clear. Literacy work was to be conducted as:

- -- a mass movement
- -- with community participation
- -- utilizing locally available resources
- -- on a voluntary basis
- -- in a selected area or region or township
- -- with the cooperation of the township and divisional literacy committees
- -- together with the Party and other mass organizations concerned, and
- -- throughout the year

By 1975, a full-fledged literacy committee structure had come about with established lines of coordination and cooperation with the Party and the government. (See graphic description of the vertical and horizontal coordination built into the administrative structure established for conducting the literacy movement, p. 33.)

The total administration structure is built upon the spirit of the New Constitution of 1974 which offered the Burmese people "centralized decentralism" - local initiative and autonomy under the Central leadership and guidance of the BSPP. Another important collaborative linkage which does not become clear from the graphic, but was successfully achieved, was the coordination with all the mass organizations such as the Workers' Association, the Peasants' Association and the Youth Association.

Lines of Cooperation and Coordination Among the Government, the Party and the Literacy Organization



The Central Committee members (about 25 in number) represent all interests - the Party, the mass organizations, government departments and the public; radio, motion picture, newspapers, publishing and printing; and trade, transportation and the universities. It works through three sub-committees: one for general organization; another for curriculum development and instructional materials; and a third sub-committee for the promotion of the reading habit among the people and to establish a library movement.

The State/Divisional Literacy Committees are the connecting link between the Central Literacy Committee and the District Literacy Committees. Their main task is to provide supervision and guidance to the leadership in the district committees.

The District Literacy Committees are essentially "organizing" committees:

-- to organize village and factory literacy committees;

-- to motivate illiterates and literates and to arouse general public opinion in the districts;

-- to carry out statistical surveys of learners and of volunteers who might teach adult learners;

-- to receive and to allocate duties to volunteer teachers from outside the district;

-- to raise funds for the campaign in the district;

-- to organize reading rooms, reading circles and libraries and to keep these supplied with follow-up materials;

-- to hold People's Victory ceremonies on the total eradication of illiteracy from a village; and

-- to render assistance in problem-solving and evaluation to village committees.

As we have mentioned earlier, the literacy movement in Burma is incremental in its strategy of coverage and proceeds, area by area, and district by district. Districts are selected by the Central Literacy Committee in consultation with the District Committees. Work at the village level continues until a whole village becomes literate. This has meant anywhere between 6 months to 2 years.

Each year a cycle of public mobilization and program implementation begins, taking a regular form. The BCLC selects campaign areas out of a list of suggestions forwarded by the 14 States

and Divisions of Burma. Selection is based on the following considerations: How many illiterates are in the area? Are the local people themselves interested? Does the BCLC have enough paper to print the needed number of adult readers, teacher guides and other teaching-learning materials? Is there money for buying slates, pencils and exercise books? Is there time enough for the BCLC to provide guidance and advice to the selected townships? Submissions are made to the Central Literacy Committee during July-August each year and choices are declared on September 8, the International Literacy Day.

The selected districts have until the end of March (that is, some six months) to prepare for the literacy classes that are launched in April with the beginning of summer vacations of schools and universities. These preparations include the following steps:

-- collection of data on illiterate adults in the various communities where classes will be launched

-- recruitment of volunteer teachers.(Emphasis is put on local recruits - literate villagers, teachers, monks and nuns. This is not difficult to do in Burma because the number of literates is higher than the number of illiterates in most wards and villages of Burma. Teachers from State schools and students from colleges and universities also become available during the vacations.)

-- training of key literacy workers and of volunteer teachers

-- sensitizing the public, both literates and illiterates among them

-- developing and declaring ways and means of funding the movement in the area

-- choosing locations for literacy centres (flexibility is the rule here so that teachers and learners can decide to meet where and when convenient to the group), and

-- collecting materials such as books, chalk, pressure lamps and kerosene lanterns.

Figures for the First Four-Year Plan, 1969-72, should give us an idea of the actual coverage:

Townships	Villages	Centers	Volunteer Teachers	Numbers Made Literate
75	15,080	22,546	206,744	840,261

The Second Four-Year Plan, 1973-76, was a period more of consolidation and review rather than of expansion. Follow-up programs such as village libraries, reading circles and clubs were developed and implemented. Six more districts were added to the earlier area of coverage. Significantly, 2 of these districts were from the non-Burman areas of Shan State, namely, Ywa-ngan, and Kalaw townships. The experience of work in these two districts made the work in the Third Four-Year Plan possible.

In the Third Four-Year Plan, 1977-80, the program has been extended to all of the 14 States and Divisions (7 States and 7 Divisions) of Burma, selecting at least one township from each State or Division and thus covering the whole country and all ethnic groups. This has meant an addition of 60 further townships.

We have earlier characterized the Burmese Literacy Campaign as a budgetless but a resourceful literacy campaign. There is indeed no budget allocation anywhere in the government budget especially for the literacy movement. Government contributions come in the form of unpaid work by government officials. Student volunteers and literates in localities carry the total burden of teaching. Peasants house and feed volunteer teachers from outside the community who in turn make labour contributions to the work on the farms of their host families. Facilities for holding classes are available free of any rent. The printing of materials is done by the information ministry of the government but the costs of paper, printing and binding is absorbed by the Central Literacy Committee. Learning materials are supplied free to learners. To pay for printing costs and other sundries, funds are collected from the public through donations and by sales of campaign badges, banners, paper fans, postcards, sling bags, camps and ash trays.

Results and effects of the campaigns

Unfortunately, no analyses have become available of the political, social or economic effects of literacy on the lives of people in Burma. The number of volunteer teachers who took part in the mass movement over the years 1965-80 and the number of those adults who were declared literate provide a sense about the size of the program:

Year	Number of Literates	Number of Teachers
1965-68	183,510	61,67
1969-72	840,261	206,74
1973-76	66,619	11,27
1977-80	214,067	78,28
	1,304,457	357,92

The years 1965-68, it will be recalled were the years of experimentation and those of 1973-76 those of review and consolidation. One should also note the teacher pupil ratios that the statistics point up. This should not, however, be seen as a 1:3 ratio; one literacy teacher instructing three learners. It is perhaps symptomatic of the turnover of teachers, as volunteers came in, worked for some weeks or months and then left.

Lessons from the Burmese Experience

1. Once again the significance of the ideological and political commitment of the ruling elite comes through the Burmese case study. The language of declarations may differ from the words used in the Russian, the Chinese or the Cuban literacy campaigns launched elsewhere and at other times, but there is a definite link between literacy and socialist reconstruction, between literacy and reform, and between literacy and nation-building.

2. The Burmese case study points out also that mass literacy campaigns have to be mass movements; they can not be conceptualized as programs to be designed and implemented by administrators. Literacy campaigns need committed cadres of workers, not cautious, career-oriented wage earners.

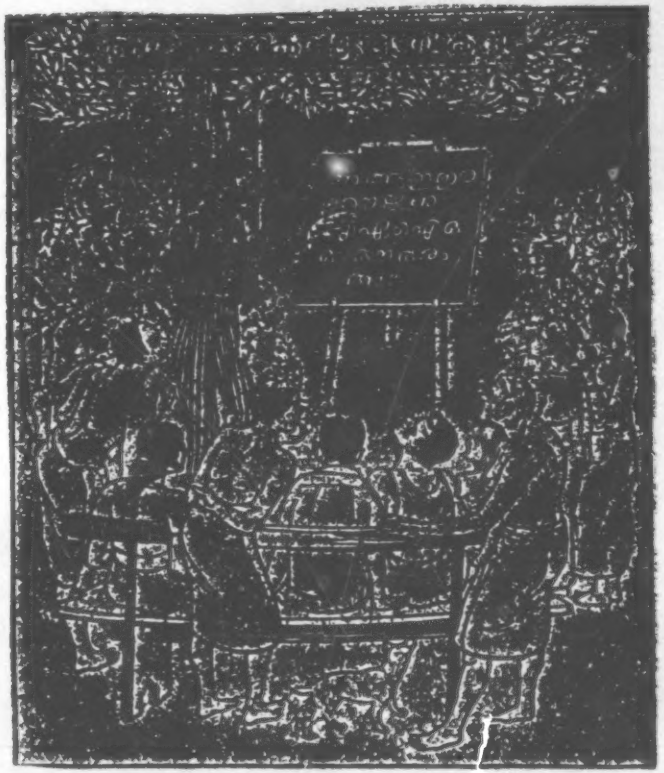
3. While mass literacy campaigns can not be run by administrators, it does not mean that these campaigns do not have to be well administered. Indeed, ideological commitment must be supported by extensive organization. The mass literacy campaigns must create and use organizational power to succeed.

4. The Burmese Way to Literacy teaches us relativism. Burmese socialism seems culturally adapted. It has apparently been found compatible with Buddhism and is spiritual and moralistic in tone. The use of cultural values of charity and service and of indigenous institutions such as the monastic schools and of monks and nuns in teaching literacy should give us food for thought. In terms of organization, while the overall framework was standardized, there was considerable flexibility built into the system and much regard was shown to local conditions. Finally, in technology, the Burmese chose teaching methods which they could use in the context of realities they faced rather than follow any methodological orthodoxy of one kind or another.

5. There is perhaps need to justify literacy at various levels and in different languages of justification. The Burmese justified literacy in transcendental terms of socialism and progress; and then again in terms of the 3-R's, change in attitudes, and agricultural productivity.

6. By making the literacy campaign a one hundred percent volunteer effort; and by allocating whatever funds were available to program elements of the campaign and not to its administration, the Burmese removed the possibility of some classes and some middle men to use those funds for new employment or for increasing their existing incomes further. This can be a very important lesson for those countries that face similar situations.

7. Finally, the Burmese campaign is an excellent example of how a country can get international visibility and some international resources by linking its work with the work of an international organization. The integration of their plans with the International Literacy Day on September 8 is an excellent idea.



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